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GEORGE THE THIRD AND CHARLES FOX

THE CONCLUDING PART OF

THE

AMERICAN REVOLUTION

BY THE RIGHT HON.

SIR GEORGE OTTO TREVELYAN, BART., O.M.

AUTHOR OF "THE LIFE AND LETTERS OF LORD MACAULAY"
AND "THE EARLY HISTORY OF CHARLES JAMES FOX"

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. II

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ADDRESS TO THE READER

THIS Second Volume of "George the Third and Charles Fox," which is likewise the concluding volume of the "American Revolution," was already in print some weeks before the outbreak of the German war. It therefore contains no allusion whatever to passing events, either direct or covert. There is nothing in the book which the author desires to correct or alter; and the subject-matter is not inappropriate to the soul-stirring period in which we are living. Regrettable things were done on both sides during the War of Independence; but that war was, in the main, conducted by British and Americans alike after a fashion which their descendants may remember with legitimate pride. Viscount Howe and Sir Guy Carleton, General Greene and General Washington, set a memorable example of how it behoves gallant and humane men to comport themselves under the stress of arms. The story of the manly and chivalrous spirit in which, four generations ago, the two great English-speaking nations fought out, and ended, their famous quarrel is a story that an Englishman need have no scruple about telling even at a moment when his country, with a steadfast and grounded belief in the justice of her cause, is in the throes of war.

GEORGE OTTO TREVELYAN.

SEPTEMBER, 1914.

PREFACE

THIS second, and final, volume of "George the Third and Charles Fox" brings to a close the series of six volumes of which the first four are entitled "The History of the American Revolution." They have been my main occupation ever since I left the House of Commons in the spring of 1897. It is for others to pronounce upon the quality of the book; but it is a source of profound satisfaction that I have been enabled to conduct my narrative of the American Revolution, and of English parliamentary politics contemporary and connected with that great event, up to that exact moment in the history of the two countries which I have had in view as my goal ever since I first approached the subject.

GEORGE OTTO TREVELYAN.

WELCOMBE,
STRATFORD ON AVON,
March 1914.

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GEORGE THE THIRD AND CHARLES FOX

THE CONCLUDING PART OF

THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

CHAPTER X

THE CABINET AND THE GENERALS. THE NATIONAL FINANCES

LORD CHATHAM, while he had the sword of England in his charge, used diligence and forethought in providing all the necessary means for conducting warlike operations by sea or land. But he always gave the entire credit of victory to the general in the field, or the admiral on deep water; and, when misfortune overtook our arms, he never condescended to shield himself from public criticism by placing the fault upon an unlucky, or even a blameworthy, subordinate. Lord North and his colleagues, when their time came, inverted Lord Chatham's principles of action in all particulars. "The war on the continent of America," (wrote the Earl of Stair in the year 1782,) "is impracticable, and the Ministers have treated with great injustice and ingratitude the officers whom they entrusted with the management of it." Admiral Viscount Howe, — who by his promptitude and valour saved Rhode Island and New York, and paralysed for near two years to come the military alliance between France and the United States, — had done nothing short of splendidly; and Sir William Howe, as Commander-in-Chief of the British armies, had done his best. While carrying out the mistaken plan of strategy imposed upon him by the Cabinet he had made serious mistakes of his own; but all the same he had gained

four pitched battles, and had occupied the enemy's capital. And yet, when the brothers Howe returned to England, they were treated by the Government which had employed them with a disloyalty which wrung from them more than one outburst of sore vexation, expressed in hot and homely language. They neither of them were practised debaters, and still less were they bold-faced and plausible declaimers; but their heartfelt words, and manly bearing, enlisted the sympathy of fair-minded men in every class, and of both parties.

Never was there a scheme of campaign more entirely the product of home manufacture than the campaign of Saratoga; and seldom, except indeed in the legend of Belisarius, was a general worse used by his official superiors than John Burgoyne. Acting under iron-bound instructions, with a far less than insufficient force of troops, he had displayed on several occasions the professional skill of a veteran commander, and on every occasion the heroic courage of a perfect soldier. A disciplinarian of the highest order, — who tempered firmness with humanity, and treated officers and privates alike as men with rights and feelings, — he had acquired, and had retained in both extremes of fortune, the confidence and affection of his little army. But his devotion to duty, and his fidelity to his taskmasters, were requited after the sad fashion described by his admirable biographer in a passage which cannot be improved upon either for accuracy or vigour. "It at once became evident," (wrote Mr. de Fonblanque,) "that Lord George Germaine was not disposed to assume, in the slightest degree, the responsibility for the failure of the expedition, and that the sacrifice of his agent commended itself to his mind as the simplest and the most natural solution of the difficulty. Accordingly, as by a preconcerted signal, the sluices of the ministerial press were opened upon the unfortunate general; and every thing that malevolence could invent, or vituperation express, was resorted to to defame his military reputation, and to blacken his private character. The American minister generally maintained

a silence more significant than direct impeachment; but his followers in Parliament poured forth their reprobation in unmeasured terms, and directly accused Burgoyne of having by rashness, folly, and disobedience of orders, brought disaster upon the country, and disgrace to the British arms."[1]

Burgoyne reached home in May 1778, and forthwith sought an audience at St. James's Palace. The King was disposed to treat his unfortunate servant with equity and consideration, and Lord George Germaine had not a little difficulty in prevailing upon His Majesty to deny him admission into the royal presence.[2] The general sent in his application for a court martial, and his demand was refused on the ground that he was a prisoner of war upon parole. Then, and not till then, he appealed for redress from his place in Parliament; but during a long while he appealed in vain. At last in the March and April of 1779 the friends of Burgoyne, and the friends of the Howes, united their forces, and obtained the appointment of a Committee of the whole House to take into consideration the papers which had been presented relative to the conduct of the American war. Sir William Howe occupied the entire period of the first sitting with a plain, soldier-like statement which threw on Lord George Germaine the primary responsibility for the isolation and defeat of Burgoyne, and for Sir William's own failure to conclude the war by the destruction of Washington's army. He was heard with silent attention, but an angry and animated debate supervened as soon as it was proposed to take steps for ensuring that the parliamentary enquiry should be a

[1] *Life and Correspondence of the Right Hon. John Burgoyne, by Edward Barrington de Fonblanque;* chapter 8.

[2] The King, in a letter to Lord North, referred to Burgoyne's contention that the orders from home, under which he acted in America, were positive and peremptory; "which," His Majesty remarked, "I much incline to." George the Third expressed to the Prime Minister his strong surprise that so many of the Cabinet doubted the propriety of bringing the unhappy fate of Lieutenant-General Burgoyne's expedition to "a candid, and not a partial, enquiry."

reality, and not a pretence. Colonel Barré, a recognised authority on matters relating to his profession, moved that Lieutenant-General Lord Cornwallis, who was then in England, should be called in, and examined as a witness. Lord North opposed the motion, and at first held his own. The allegiance of his majority was hard to shake, but it gradually became evident that the unbought and independent convictions of the assembly were all against him. On the third day of the discussion Lord Nugent, a Cornish borough member and a pluralist placeman, came to the rescue of the Government with an appeal for the forbearance of all good patriots. The proposed enquiry, (he argued,) would distract the attention of Ministers "from the hostile attack of a powerful foreign foe," and would consume the time and thoughts which they otherwise might expend "on planning and executing measures for the safety and advantage of the country."

Charles Fox was upon him almost before he resumed his seat. "Every person in the House," (he said,) "who has the honour and interest of the country at heart, has the strongest and most cogent reasons to lament that the present Ministers have *ever* planned, or *ever* executed. It would have been a most fortunate circumstance for England if the noble lord in the blue ribbon, and the noble American Secretary near him, had been asleep in that House, or out of it, on the day when one, or both of them, planned the accursed American war, — and if they had been embarrassed and hampered by debates in Parliament when they were devising those measures of ruin, folly, and national disgrace. But surely," (proceeded Fox,) "the noble lord, the member for St. Mawes, is not serious in the motives he has assigned for putting a stop to the present enquiry! Does he pretend to believe that Ministers will hereafter be less indolent, less incapable, and more regardful of the public concerns than at present? His lordship is better informed. He secretly smiles when he talks in this strain. Last summer, when the fate of the nation was at stake, and when England

was threatened with invasion, there was not a single Cabinet Minister so near town as fifty miles. In the future as in the past, instead of being at hand when effective measures, directed to vigorous exertions, and a proper employment of our national strength and resources, ought steadily to engage their attention, those two noble lords, and the rest of their brethren in the Cabinet, will fly from the fatigues of office. They will be amusing themselves at their country-seats for weeks, perhaps for months, together, leaving the great business of the nation to a few clerks in London; or if they should, in their respective retreats, direct their attention to public affairs, it will be to devise means, not for defeating the national enemy, but for impeding every attempt to institute a parliamentary enquiry into their own blunders, their own negligences, and their own incapacity." Those were burning words, but they were not too warm for the atmosphere by which the orator was surrounded; and his denunciation of the American war, and of the feeble and desultory style in which it had been conducted, evoked the enthusiastic approval of his audience. "Lord North," according to the official report, "rose to defend his former opinion; but the House would not hear him, though he rose five or six times; and his lordship was at length obliged to sit down. The question being put on Colonel Barré's motion, it was carried almost unanimously, without a division."

During the next eight weeks the House was constantly in Committee, sometimes examining and cross-examining witnesses, and sometimes wrangling on the main question with an acerbity not very appropriate to proceedings which partook of a judicial nature. Rigby assailed Burgoyne on three separate occasions, in terms most ungenerous when applied by a Minister to a military officer who had done all that in him lay to carry out the orders of the Cabinet. What excuse, (asked Rigby,) could be pleaded for a general who had bidden five thousand British troops to pile their arms in the face of a despicable enemy, an undisciplined militia? What

hypocrisy it was in the leader to pretend to lament the fate of his unhappy followers! Had he not left them in captivity beyond the ocean, while he himself was enjoying the amusements and pleasures of the first metropolis on the globe? At last Burgoyne turned upon his persecutor. The Right Honourable gentleman, (he replied,) not content with his former general and injurious comments, had now boldly asserted direct falsehoods. It was a falsehood to say that five thousand British troops had capitulated at Saratoga. There were less than two thousand, and those exhausted, and sunk to the lowest ebb of bodily strength by a continuous course of almost unprecedented fatigue. Above all, (continued Burgoyne,) it was false to speak of the Americans as a despicable enemy. They had been four to one in number, and they were good and steady soldiers. It was unbecoming in a British Minister to traduce the honour of those three British regiments which, on the nineteenth of September 1777, "had stood in a close and continual fire for four hours, all of them suffering heavy loss, and one of them remaining with less than sixty rank and file, and four or five officers," by falsely disparaging their opponents as worthless irregulars, and cowardly militiamen. The language used by Burgoyne was to the last degree unparliamentary, and every one knew that he was ready to maintain at daybreak in Hyde Park what he had said over-night in the House of Commons. But no member there present was so tender of Rigby's reputation for veracity as to call Burgoyne to order; and Rigby himself preserved a silence not less characteristic than the insolence with which he had flung about his malicious charges.

The House of Commons was determined to arrive at the truth, and the witnesses whom it summoned were selected with insight and discrimination. The list was confined to the Earl Cornwallis, and to Major-General Grey, who had been, beyond all comparison, the two most distinguished of Sir William Howe's lieutenants; together with Major Montrésor, the Chief Engineer of

his army, and Sir Andrew Hamond, the smartest and most competent among Lord Howe's post-captains. These gentlemen, one and all, begged to be excused from the obligation of criticising the tactics of the general, or the admiral, under whom they had served. But with regard to the special character, and the future prospects, of the war on the American continent they spoke freely and fully, from intimate knowledge, and with a powerful and very apparent effect upon the convictions of the House of Commons. The facts which they disclosed were in a high degree damaging to the reputation of the Cabinet, and most disheartening to all Englishmen, both in and out of Parliament, who hitherto had cherished the belief that America could be re-conquered; and the evidence given by General Grey, in particular, made a deep and lasting impression upon the public mind.

General Charles Grey, afterwards the first Earl Grey, — father to the Prime Minister who carried the Reform Act of 1832, and progenitor of several other eminent statesmen, dead or still with us, — was a high authority on military matters, for his name was associated with an unbroken series of military successes. He had founded a reputation for dexterous leadership in the night attack on Paoli Tavern, and had increased it by his well-timed and masterly tactics at the crisis of the battle of Germantown, and by a long succession of smaller operations, all of which were shrewdly devised, and brilliantly executed. The Americans charged him with harshness, and even with inhumanity. Grey undoubtedly belonged to the school of military men who account the utmost rigour of war to be the surest method of hastening the return of peace; and his character as a stern warrior lent all the greater weight to the uncompromising opinions which, as a witness before the Committee, he delivered for the information of Parliament. He gave his views on the war in America quietly, but frankly and emphatically; and no cross-examination on the part of Ministers could shake the force of his testimony. He

ascribed the repeated failure of our invading armies to the impenetrability of the forest, the difficulties of transport and supply, and, (above all,) to the temper of the inhabitants, who, whatever might be alleged to the contrary, "were almost unanimous against us." That was General Grey's explanation of past occurrences, and he had nothing hopeful or reassuring to say about the future. He stated it as his mature belief that the Royal troops then in America would be far too few to suppress the rebellion even when reinforced by all the battalions which could be withdrawn from fighting the French in the West Indian Islands, and by those six thousand recruits whom the Secretary at War, greatly over-rating his own powers of performance, had pledged himself to send out from England.

The Ministers endeavoured to give a more favourable turn to the investigation by establishing, out of the mouth of another set of witnesses, a very different theory of the war than that which, up to this point, had been set before the Committee. Lord George Germaine made it his business to provide counter-evidence to the testimony given by General Grey; but counter-evidence of an authoritative character was hard to get. The Crown witnesses were only two in number. The first was Major-General Robertson, a veteran who had contrived to spend the greater part of a very long career in easy and profitable administrative posts; and who had been occupying, — and, (unless he is greatly belied,) feathering, — a comfortable nest in the city of New York while the British army was campaigning in Pennsylvania. The other was Mr. Joseph Galloway, a Philadelphian lawyer of note, who had been anti-English in the earlier stages of the American Revolution, but who had come over to the Royal cause, and who had found in Sir William Howe a staunch patron, and a liberal paymaster. This pair of witnesses gave it as their opinion that the force, which the War Office had from time to time despatched across the Atlantic, was sufficient, if properly handled, to cope with the rebellion, and bring the insur-

gent colonies to reason. They assured the Committee that a vast majority of the American people, — two-thirds of them, as estimated by General Robertson, and four-fifths according to Mr. Joseph Galloway, who dealt fearlessly in round numbers, — "were from principle and disposition zealously attached to the Government of Great Britain." They asserted that British troops were decidedly superior to the Americans "in their own favourite mode of bush-fighting," and were, generally speaking, more at home among the woods; and they even went so far as to maintain that the American forest presented no impediment whatsoever to the advance of an army. This assortment of paradoxes obtained no credence among members of Parliament who attended the proceedings of the Committee; and contempt deepened into disgust when Galloway began to indulge in unfavourable comments upon Sir William Howe's generalship, and Lord Howe's naval tactics, interspersed with acrid remarks upon Sir William Howe's personal character. It was evident that, if a Resolution in favour of the Howes was brought forward while the House was in Committee, the Government would be beaten on a division. Under these circumstances Lord North adopted a course which certainly was prudent, but which many of his friends, and all his opponents, condemned as unhandsome. On the twenty-ninth of June Sir William Howe was a few minutes behind time when the afternoon sitting opened; and the Ministers, making an excuse of this trivial incident, without any previous notice, and with no debate, carried a motion to dissolve the Committee.

The curtain had descended on an unfinished performance, and the principal actors in the drama went their several ways. Lord Cornwallis returned to his duty on the line of march, and on the field of battle. A grateful Ministry sent General Robertson back to New York, with a commission in his pocket as Civil Governor of the city; and, in that paradise of jobbery, he took care to reward himself up to the full measure of his deserts. Mr. Joseph Galloway fell back into private life, and was

busy over the composition of an endless string of pamphlets; — "Reflections on the American Rebellion," and "Cool Thoughts on the Consequences of American Independence," and a "Letter to Lord Howe on his Naval Conduct," and "Letters to a Nobleman on the Conduct of the War in the Middle Colonies" in which Sir William Howe was depicted as a gambler, a voluptuary, and a drawing-room soldier. The collapse of the enquiry was a final blow to Burgoyne, who thenceforward lay at the mercy of his implacable enemies. As soon as Parliament had been prorogued, and his friends had left London for their country-houses, he received an order to repair to Boston, and deliver himself up to the Republican authorities as a prisoner of war. He addressed the American Secretary in a manly and pathetic letter, begging that the King would accept the resignation of his Colonelcy of Light Dragoons, and his Governorship of Fort William, — "the rewards," (he wrote,) "by which the services of more than thirty years had been overpaid by His Majesty, and his Royal Grandfather." Rigby and Germaine now had their will on Burgoyne; and his abandonment of three thousand pounds a year, which left him with his half-pay of scarcely as many hundreds, was curtly acknowledged in an ungracious letter from the War Office. He was attended into his retirement by the good-will and sympathy of Londoners, with whom, in the heyday of his prosperity, he had been a favourite in spite of some grave faults, and of some trifling affectations. "Last night," (so a paragraph in the newspapers ran,) "General Burgoyne was at Covent Garden Theatre in a plain white frock-suit of cloth, without any of the ensigns of his military dignity;" and he was noticed, with respectful interest, walking abroad of an afternoon in civilian dress, without the scarlet coat which the British officer of those days, everywhere and on all occasions, made it his pride to wear.[1]

[1] Rigby's flippant indifference to the feelings and susceptibilities of gallant men, who had endured a reverse in battle, was in singular contrast to the language employed under similar circumstances by a wiser and more pa-

In June 1779, when the Committee of Inquiry ceased its sittings, England was confronted with a situation replete with present calamity, and fraught with infinite possibilities of future danger. The situation was admirably described, in the "Annual Register" of the current year, by a contemporary author who was writing the history of his own times, fresh and hot, from twelvemonth to twelvemonth; and his weighty and ominous phrases cannot even now, after all this lapse of time, be read by an Englishman without something very nearly resembling a thrill of patriotic anxiety. "The year of which we treat," (so this account ran,) "presented the most awful appearance of public affairs which this country had perhaps beheld for many ages. All ancient systems of policy, relative to any scheme of equality, or balance of power, seemed forgotten in Europe. Friends and allies were no more with respect to us. On the contrary, whether it proceeded from our fault, or whether it was merely our misfortune, mankind seemed to wait, with an aspect which at best bespoke indifference, for the event of that ruin which was expected to burst upon us."

Those words, at that moment, must have found an echo in very many hearts. The interest which our people felt in affairs of state was no longer a matter of party tradition, or constitutional theory. However faint might have been their taste for politics, they all were under an obligation to become politicians, inasmuch as the disastrous effect of public measures upon their own private fortunes was borne in upon them at every turn. Everybody was harassed; everybody was inconvenienced; many had already been beggared outright

triotic minister. In the year 1758, after the frightful catastrophe at Ticonderoga, Mr. Secretary Pitt addressed a letter to the general of the defeated army. "The King," he wrote, "saw with much concern that an enterprise of the greatest importance had unhappily miscarried with so considerable a loss of brave officers and soldiers. At the same time the brave spirit, which the troops showed in the unfortunate attempt, gives the King just room to hope for future success; and I am ordered by His Majesty to express to the officers and soldiers his perfect satisfaction in their behaviour."

by no fault of their own; and the whole world was far poorer, with the exception of certain rather questionable individuals whose sudden access of wealth was viewed with suspicion and resentment by the great mass of their honest and hard-working fellow-countrymen.

The earliest shock to what had hitherto seemed the impregnable fortress of our national prosperity was the agreement entered upon by the American colonies, as far back as the year 1769, to refrain from importing British goods; but British traders were at first unwilling to believe that the King's Ministers would persist in a course so fatal to the commercial interests of his dominions. "They had formed," said Edmund Burke, "a confused opinion that things would come of themselves to an amicable settlement." Burke, for his part, was under no such delusion. The evil, (he wrote,) would be gradual, and therefore incurable; and the merchants would break, "after the manufacturers had perished insensibly, and had melted down without notice into the mass of national wretchedness."[1] Burke's anticipations were fulfilled to the letter. The American insurgents kept to their resolution, and refrained from buying British products; debts due to British middlemen and mill-owners from their Transatlantic customers were repudiated to the amount of a million and a half of pounds sterling; and, as if that was not enough, in November 1775 Lord North placed upon the Statute Book an Act to Prohibit Trade and Intercourse with the Thirteen Colonies. The maritime skill, and the money-making enterprise, of those colonies were forthwith diverted to the remunerative business of privateering; while many scores of British traders were taken and plundered by pirate cruisers built in French shipyards, manned by French crews, and mounted with French cannon,

[1] By "manufacturers" Burke probably meant the wage-earners, and not the employers. That was the sense in which the word then was frequently used. Burke's meaning is illustrated by an interesting passage in his letter to the Marquis of Rockingham of September 14, 1775, about Mr. Bull of Bristol and his four hundred workmen.

with nothing American on board of them except a strip of bunting displaying the Stars and Stripes, and a letter of marque sent over in blank by the Congress at Philadelphia, and filled in, and dated, by Benjamin Franklin at Paris. Then the European war broke out; and the French corsairs, increased many times in number, thenceforward ravaged the high seas under their own national flag; while French and Spanish men-of-war scoured those home waters which the negligence of Lord Sandwich had left almost bare of British frigates. And, if any British merchant still was sufficiently bold to tempt fortune, and face the risk of capture, he was liable, on the eve of sailing, to hear that all his able seamen had been carried off by the press-gang to meet the demands of the most ubiquitous and calamitous naval war in which our country has ever been involved.[1]

A cry of affliction and alarm arose from men of every class and employment throughout the British Isles, and from all parts of the British empire which still remained to us. "The effect of our impolitic quarrel with America is now felt, as well as understood. It is true that a few persons foresaw, and foretold, the consequences; but they were too few, and were not attended to. Wool, that used to be the staple commodity of England, is now become a mere drug. It will fetch no price. If leave is not obtained to export

[1] In the winter of 1776 the American Commissioners at Paris wrote to Congress asking that some blank commissions for French privateers might be sent over by the first opportunity. Three years afterwards, when John Hancock had ceased to be President of Congress, Franklin reported as follows from his residence at Auteuil. "The blank commissions remaining of those sent to us here are all signed by Mr. Hancock, which occasions some difficulty. If Congress approves of my continuing to issue such commissions, I wish to have a fresh supply." *The Revolutionary Diplomatic Correspondence of the United States; Edited under the direction of Congress by Francis Wharton.*

More than eighty years afterwards Doctor Franklin's inventiveness became a source of serious embarrassment to the cause of the American Union. His ingenious, but very far from defensible, action in the case of the French privateers had created a whole bundle of precedents in favour of the notorious Alabama cruiser.

it raw, the dealers in that capital article must be all ruined; and lands are fallen, throughout the whole North of England, at least five-and-twenty per cent." That account came from Kendal in Westmoreland; while the pecuniary loss was on a far more extensive scale, and the suffering vastly more acute, in the West Riding of Yorkshire, with its Cloth Halls in the great towns, its five hundred broad-cloth and blanket factories, and its thirty thousand families whose livelihood depended on the trade in wool. Among all the potentates of British commerce none had held their heads higher than the American merchants in Glasgow. We read how the Virginia traders, "known as the Tobacco Lords, strutted in business hours in front of the Trongate Piazza, clad in scarlet cloaks, cocked hats, and powdered wigs, bearing with portly grace gold-headed canes in their hand," and exchanging courtesies with a City minister, or a physician, or a professor in the University, while the shopkeepers, humbly recognising "the subtle difference which lay between a tradesman and a trader," stood along the side of the street in deferential attitudes, patiently waiting to catch the great man's eye. "Large fortunes were acquired by the Virginia merchants; good marriages were made; and fine estates were bought. Everything seemed in their favour till the American war broke out, and ruined the trade with Virginia. Disastrous failures followed; princely fortunes were lost; and many who had dominated society for thirty or forty years had to struggle with small incomes, and to sink into obscurity."[1] Things were as bad, or worse, in all the other great centres of industry and commerce. An American Loyalist, who beguiled his exile with a tour through our Midland counties, found the population of Birmingham heartily opposed to the war.[2] "In Liverpool," said Burke, "they are literally almost ruined by this American war,

[1] *The Social Life of Scotland in the Eighteenth Century, by Henry Grey Graham.*

[2] *Journal of Samuel Curwen;* August 28, 1776.

but love it as they suffer from it." They soon began to love it less. "The Americans," (wrote Thomas Bentley in May 1778,) "do not need to revenge themselves on the foolish Liverpoolians. The natural course of things is doing this business very effectually."[1]

The ruin of our trade with the West Indies was consummated by the French war; but that ruin had begun with the commencement of the American Revolution. "Early in the winter of 1776 two of the greatest Jamaica merchants in London broke for the amazing sum of nine hundred and seventy-five thousand pounds. Their failure was so void of fraud that their creditors agreed to allow them a thousand a year apiece till their affairs could be made up."[2] As time went on, and enemies multiplied upon us, very serious intelligence from another quarter appeared in the columns of that newspaper which, of all others, was devoted to the interests of the Government. "The consequence," (said the Morning Post,) "of our abandoning the Mediterranean, as we have done, is the almost total loss of our trade in that part of the world. Our Italian imports come to us at an expense of near two hundred per cent. more than when the war broke out." The distress was so universal that it invaded the august section of society where private fortunes are too firmly based to be affected by any ordinary financial crisis. The young Duke of Rutland, who had a noble income as long as his farmers paid their rent, and who was a loving and a very generous husband,[3] found occasion to read his wife a lecture on economy like the thrifty master of any middle-class household. "It is impossible," he wrote in December 1779, "that we can long continue our present mode of living. You must not purchase everything your eye is attached to, — no su-

[1] *Letters from Thomas Bentley to Josiah Wedgwood, privately published by Josiah Clement Wedgwood, M.P. for Newcastle under Lyme.*

[2] *Walpole's Last Journals;* December 9, 1776.

[3] During the twelve years of their married life the Duke had his Duchess painted four times by Sir Joshua Reynolds.

perfluous clothes beyond that is requisite for you to appear clean and decent. You must likewise be attentive to the expenses of the children, whose bills, you know, I objected to last year. I assure you I shall put my affairs under regulation; for I have enormous private debts suspended over my head, besides the appearance of a general calamity. Almost an universal bankruptcy among the tenants, if rents are not lowered, is constantly expected." Holders of Government securities, the most cautious and provident of mankind, saw with consternation their property drop in value until they had lost forty pounds out of every hundred which they had put by; and the older among them despaired of surviving until the return of peace restored their dwindled fortunes. Horace Walpole ruefully acknowledged that he could not afford to bid even for a portrait of Sir Walter Raleigh. "The Stocks," he wrote, "are so terribly fallen that what trifles I had saved *from myself* for others would not now pay the legacies I have given; and I must endeavour, if I live, to hoard the deficiency. This is an uncomfortable reflection; but who, that reflects, has not some such to make? The nation, like a great boy, does not allow itself a moment's thought. It engages every day to support new wars, though it cannot manage one of them."[1]

The collapse of private prosperity was accompanied by a rapid decline in the public finances of the country. During the second year of the American rebellion the annual expenditure on the Army and Navy rose from four millions to eight; and the National Debt, which had been in steady course of reduction ever since the Peace of Paris, now took a fresh start.[2] In May 1777 Lord North informed the House of Commons that he proposed to borrow five millions at an increased rate of interest, and to obtain additional funds by the establish-

[1] Walpole to the Countess of Ossory; Berkeley Square, Jan. 31, 1781.

[2] Doctor Richard Price, in his *Historical Deduction and Analysis of the National Debt*, published in 1777, places the amount of that debt paid off during the twelve years between 1763 and 1775 at £10,639,793.

ment of a State Lottery with fifty thousand ten-pound tickets, — as if there was not more than sufficient gambling in society already. In the same month of the same session Parliament was called upon by the Ministry to pay the King's debts, to the tune of half a million, and to vote upwards of forty thousand pounds to the Landgrave of Hesse Cassel, for "expenses incurred in the late war." Since the Seven Years' War came to an end twice seven years had passed away; and the Landgrave had now selected an unfortunate moment for reviving a claim on the British Treasury which had so long been dormant. News had but lately reached London that the three crack battalions of those troops, whom he hired out to us at famine prices, had capitulated at Trenton after an engagement in which they did not succeed in killing dead a single American soldier. Edmund Burke spoke up stoutly on behalf of the taxpayer. "The Elector of Hesse," he said, "has availed himself of the glorious, golden, opportunity of England's distress for extorting from us a fresh concession; but dignity and honour require that we should not allow ourselves to be bullied out of our money."

That was the first wave in the flood of expenditure and indebtedness which inundated the Exchequer, and which, if the King and his Ministers had been allowed to pursue their policy to its ultimate consequences, would never have subsided until it had drowned the national credit in a cataclysm of bankruptcy. The charge of our fighting services rose year by year to eleven millions, to twelve and a half millions, to fifteen, to seventeen, and at last to twenty millions. That sum was nearly twice what it had cost us to shatter the power of France in the year of Minden and Quebec, and four times, or five times, what was spent in the year when the Rock of Gibraltar was captured, and the Battle of Blenheim won.[1] The interest due on the National Debt was doubled between 1774 and 1782;

[1] *Return of Public Income and Expenditure, Ordered by the House of Commons to be Printed, 29 July, 1869. Part I.*

and the capital amount was swollen by a hundred and twenty millions. The Three Per Cents fell almost continuously from 89 to 55, and then bounded up five points as soon as Lord North was expelled from office. The war, both in Europe and America, was mainly fought on credit; for the Bedfords, who never greatly concerned themselves about the well-being of contemporary England, had no conscience whatever with regard to the burdens which they were heaping upon posterity. But even the most reckless financier was obliged to admit that a portion of the increased interest on the rapidly growing debt must be defrayed out of the current income of the country, or the Chancellor of the Exchequer would be ashamed to show his face in the money-market when he entered it in his character of a borrower; and therefore every fresh loan involved the imposition of some additional taxation, and the day on which Lord North introduced his annual Budget was seldom or never a red letter day in the House of Commons.

CHAPTER XI

THE IRISH VOLUNTEERS.

THE prospect was gloomy; and, towards whatever quarter an Englishman who loved his country cast his eyes, he saw much to discompose, and nothing to reassure him. In order to find matter for serious reflection he did not need to look far afield, or even to extend his gaze beyond the confines of the Kingdom. Ireland was seething with disaffection; and the British garrison itself, — that part of the British garrison, at any rate, which had most fight in it, — was in hot revolt.

The twin curses of Ireland had at last come home to roost. The ecclesiastical system, and the territorial system, which had originally been created for the despoilment and abasement of the native Roman Catholic inhabitants, had in course of time come to be regarded with detestation by a majority of the descendants of the Protestant settlers. "The Irish Establishment," wrote Mr. Lecky, "was the Church of the poor in the sense that they paid for it, and in no other. Its adherents were certainly less than one-seventh of the population, and they belonged exclusively to the wealthiest class. And this astonishing Establishment was mainly supported by tithes." [1] A large portion of those tithes was paid, and paid most unwillingly, by the Protestant Nonconformists, who were far more numerous in Ulster than the members of the Establishment. It was computed that fifty thousand Scotch families had settled in that province since the Revolution of 1688, in addition to those who had been there already; and there were parishes in the diocese of Londonderry where Presbyterians outnumbered Churchmen by forty to one. They maintained the State Church out of the fruits of their toil;

[1] Chapter 7 of Mr. Lecky's *History of England in the Eighteenth Century.*

but they received nothing from it except hard words and harsh usage. The influence of the Bishops was strong in the Irish House of Commons; in the Irish House of Lords they commanded, and sometimes even constituted, an actual majority; and they used their political power to treat their Nonconformist fellow-countrymen with signal injustice, and still more glaring ingratitude. Within half a generation after the Protestant re-conquest of Ireland those brave sectarians, who had defended the wall of Derry, and borne the brunt of the warfare at Enniskillen, were expelled by statute from all military and civil employment under the Crown, from the town-council, and from the bench of magistrates. They might not legally be married in their own chapels by the ministers of their own denomination, and their dead were not buried in the parish churchyard without an unseemly wrangle over every funeral. Ireland was no longer the place for a self-respecting Nonconformist. An immense emigration commenced from all the counties of Ulster, and continued until many thousand Protestants had transferred themselves and their children, their industry, their thrift, and the inextinguishable memory of their cruel wrongs, to a new home across the Atlantic Ocean; and so it came about that four out of every nine of Colonel Morgan's riflemen, the fiercest of all fighters in Benedict Arnold's force at Saratoga, were frontiersmen of Scotch-Irish descent from the Pennsylvanian border. It has been wittily and truly said that Archbishop Laud, and none other, must be regarded as the real founder of Puritan New England. In the same sense, and almost to the same extent, it was the prelates of the Irish Establishment who stocked the Eastern and Central Colonies of North America with a host of hardy and enterprising settlers, and bitter enemies of the English rule.

The Protestant exodus to America had been set in motion by the wantonness of ecclesiastical intolerance; but the second, and the third, emigrations were due to other causes. The natural channels of Ireland's com-

mercial activity had long ago been blocked by the jealousy of the English Parliament. No industry of any consequence remained to her except her linen-trade; and the linen-trade, which depended for its prosperity on the American market, was brought to the verge of ruin by the non-importation agreements of the discontented Colonies. It was stated on official authority that large numbers of weavers had been reduced to penury, or forced into uncongenial and miserably paid occupations, and that no fewer than ten thousand of them had deserted Ireland for America. But that troop of refugees was small in comparison to the multitude of cultivators of the soil who were driven into exile by the greedy, and most unpatriotic, action of certain territorial magnates. These ill friends to their country, when the situation in America was already very critical, could think of nothing but their own pockets. The Marquis of Donegal selected that moment to hand over his enormous estates in Antrim, in consideration of a great sum of ready money, to two or three Belfast merchants who cleared the land of the sitting tenants, and sublet every vacant farm to the new-comer who offered the largest rack-rent. The same course was taken by another powerful Antrim landlord; and the example was followed far and wide throughout all the four provinces of Ireland. This policy of spoliation was mainly directed against Protestant farmers, who were best worth the plundering. The fruits of all that loving labour which had been expended by five generations of yeomen on the improvement of their holdings were confiscated without one farthing of compensation; their ancestral homesteads were made over to the highest bidders; and their mortification was the more intense because the highest bidder in almost all cases belonged to the Roman Catholic religion. They complained, in a pathetic and futile petition addressed to the Viceroy at Dublin, that those among them who had refused to pay the extravagant rents demanded by their landlords had been turned out, and their farms "given to Papists, who will promise

any rent." All who could scrape together the passage-money sailed for New York or Philadelphia with the intention of beginning life over again in a country where the produce of their industry would not lie at other men's mercy. It has been stated that, during the two years subsequent to the Antrim evictions, thirty thousand Protestants embarked for the New World from Ulster alone, and almost as many more from the rest of the island. Those were not the days of exact statistics; nor is Ireland a country where, in a case of political and agrarian controversy, heads are accurately and impartially counted. But it is certain that, for many months together, there was not shipping enough in the Southern ports to carry away the crowd of Protestant emigrants; and some of the most flourishing Protestant settlements in Cork, West Meath, and King's County altogether changed the character of their population, and were converted into centres and strongholds of Catholicism.

It had been utterly useless to seek the redress of these multifarious grievances from the wisdom and justice of the Irish Legislature, for that body was in a condition of servile dependence upon England. The Parliament at Westminster could enact statutes which were binding upon Ireland; but no Bill might pass through the Parliament at Dublin until it had been approved, and manipulated in all its details, first by the Irish Privy Council sitting in the Castle, and then by the English Privy Council, which for this purpose was the English Cabinet, sitting in Whitehall. If the Bill ever returned to Ireland, — and there was very little probability that a legislative proposal, which had any good in it, would re-cross the Channel, — the Irish Parliament had no power to alter or amend its provisions, and no choice but to reject, or accept, it in the precise shape in which it had come back from London. But, although Irishmen might not frame their own statutes, they could speak with inexhaustible fluency, and almost irresistible force and charm; and they might discuss, and place on record in the Journals of their Parliament,

Resolutions which, in the eyes of their countrymen, had all the authority, and a great deal more than the popularity, of English-made laws. It was worth the while of the Lord-Lieutenant and his official advisers to buy up as many votes, and stop as many eloquent mouths, as could be accomplished by the most profuse and unscrupulous expenditure of the public money; and they went about their work with a thoroughness of system, and an easy and graceless disregard for common decency which the Patronage Secretary of the English Treasury, in the most heroic epoch of parliamentary bribery, had never ventured to emulate.

All the innermost secrets of the laboratory of corruption in Dublin Castle have long ere this been laid bare for the amazement of posterity. The Earl of Harcourt, who was Viceroy of Ireland up to a short time before the American Revolution, left among his papers a confidential document which is nothing less than a profit and loss account of the transactions between the Irish Government and its followers in either House of Parliament. Opposite the name of each Peer and Commoner may be read a plain and businesslike statement of his offices, and sinecures, and pensions, — of the titles which had been conferred on him, the jobs which had been perpetrated at his request, and the amount of parliamentary service and attendance which he had given in return for his wages. One nobleman, for example, had been appointed a Privy Councillor, a Trustee of the Linen Board with a more than comfortable salary, Master of the Ordnance, a General on the Staff, the Colonel of a regiment, the Governor of a Fortress, the Governor of two counties, and the Constable of a borough; and, not contented with this shower of favours, he still was pressing his claim for a Marquisate. Another was a Privy Councillor, a Trustee of the Linen Board, and Governor of the County of Waterford. "His brother John," (so the entry runs,) "is a Commissioner of Revenue; his brother William has a good Living; — and he asks to be a Marquess." A third had been made a Peer and a

Privy Councillor, and Governor of two counties. He had had a Deanery for a friend, a Church Living and a Privy Councillorship for one son, and a Commissionership of Customs for another, although he himself was described as "infirm and helpless, a dear bargain." A fourth, — who had been recently ennobled, and had a son on the Linen Board, and a son on the Commission of Customs, — was marked down as "more than half an idiot, who requires watching." Those were only four on a list of thirty Earls; and the other ranks of the peerage fared no worse in the competition for places of profit. The members of the House of Commons who voted with the Administration were on an average almost as well rewarded, although a stricter reckoning was kept of the fidelity with which they performed their duties. "Ranger of the Curragh, and a pension of two hundred per annum for thirty-one years; — which he has sold. A Commissioner of Accounts of five hundred a year, and wants an additional salary of three hundred a year. Attends constantly." "A Privy Councillor. Commissioner of Customs. A large Living to his brother, and made Taster of Wines with a thousand per annum in addition. Discontented that his brother, who is under age, could not be made a Bishop." "Commissioner of Customs, Trustee of the Linen Board, and his brother a Bishop. Has four seats in Parliament. Sells two. He ought not to do it now he is provided for." "Made a Baronet. Asked two other favours, and has never attended since." Amidst all this mob of clamorous and querulous self-seekers it is refreshing to meet with a gentleman against whose name is written: "An uncommon good friend of Government, and has asked for nothing."

The descendants of the Scotch and English settlers in Ireland had at ordinary times endured this despicable form of government with a very sore heart; but the times were no longer ordinary. The example of America reminded them of the fact, which men of their race seldom forget for long together, that people must never

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expect to be assisted in obtaining their rights unless they are prepared to help themselves. They were strangely moved by the world-famous events which were unfolded in steady and inevitable succession beyond the Atlantic Ocean. Long before the fighting began at Lexington they had watched, with keen interest and admiration, the dignified and uncompromising resistance offered by the American Assemblies to the encroachments of the British Parliament; and their feeling was shared in full measure by those members of their own national Legislature who were not in the pay of Dublin Castle. As far back as the autumn of 1771 Benjamin Franklin, — who at that period was regarded as the representative of the American people, and the incarnation of the American genius, — visited Dublin as a tourist, and was desirous of hearing a debate in the Irish Parliament. His fellow-traveller, who sat for an English borough at Westminster, was admitted to a place in the body of the Hall among the members. "I supposed," wrote Franklin, "that I must go to the Gallery, when the Speaker stood up, and acquainted the House that he understood there was in town an American gentleman of, (as he was pleased to say,) distinguished character and merit, a member or delegate of some of the Parliaments of that country, who was desirous of being present at the debates; that there was a rule of the House for admitting members of English Parliaments, and that he supposed the House would consider the American Assemblies as English Parliaments; but, as this was the first instance, he had chosen not to give any order in it without receiving their directions. On the question the House gave a loud, unanimous, *Aye;* when two members came to me without the bar, led me in between them, and placed me honorably and commodiously." It was a scene which would make a fine historical picture for the Capitol at Washington, or the City Hall of Philadelphia.

Franklin described the Irish gentry as a very sensible, polite, and hearty people, with many brave spirits

among them. He found them disposed to be friends of America, "in which," he said, "I endeavoured to confirm them, with the expectation that our growing weight might in time be thrown into their scale, and, by joining our influence with theirs, a more equitable treatment from the English nation might be obtained for them as well as for us." Benjamin Franklin was a judicious counsellor; but the Irish intellect had been acute enough to discover for itself the cardinal truth that, then as always, England's difficulty was Ireland's opportunity. Irish Protestants, who in those days regarded themselves as the Irish nation, were not the men to let slip so rare and unexpected a chance of securing their national independence. The doctrine that Ireland, though subject to the King of England, was not subject to the English Parliament, was now rapidly becoming the dominant creed of the country.[1] Religious bigotry for the time being was extinct in Ulster, and had given place to fierce, and all but universal, political enthusiasm. "Formerly Protestant and Papist were the key-words. They are now Court and Country." That remark had been made by a shrewd observer as far back as the year 1762; for the storm had long been brewing, and the air of Ireland was already overcharged with electricity when the cyclone arrived across the sea from America. The Irish Revolution commenced in earnest about the time that the news of Saratoga reached Europe. Two opposing hosts were thenceforward arrayed against each other within the walls of the Irish Senate, carrying on a brisk, and not unchivalrous, warfare with the legitimate and time-honoured weapons of speech and vote. Wonderful debating it was; for the Parliament House swarmed with eager and ready speakers, conspicuous among whom was Henry Grattan, then in the flower of his years, and the prime of his capacity. He was destined to prove himself one of the most brilliant, and quite the most successful, of all party leaders that ever championed a

[1] Those are Mr. Lecky's words in the seventeenth chapter of his History.

great cause; for during the whole of that prolonged struggle he conceived and planned nothing which he did not attempt, and attempted nothing which he failed to obtain.

This great political movement, to outward appearance, was engineered in strict conformity with legal and constitutional usage; but the issue was decided not so much by the dialectical ability, or the tactical skill, of the Opposition orators in Parliament, as by the immense reserve of physical force which lay behind them. There was power and efficacy in Grattan's eloquence, and Hussey Burgh's glowing rhetoric, and in the close and weighty reasoning by which Henry Flood, who had rejoined the national ranks after a temporary sojourn in the hostile camp, was trying to win back the confidence and affection of his fellow-countrymen. But the arguments which ultimately told upon the convictions of the English Ministry were to be read, not in parliamentary reports or in controversial pamphlets, but in the stern faces and serried ranks of the Irish Volunteers. They constituted a military force raised from every class and calling throughout the entire Protestant community. Their commander-in-chief was an important nobleman; and his principal lieutenants were dukes and earls, or rich commoners who might have been barons for the asking, with thirty thousand, seventy thousand, or a hundred and twenty thousand acres of land in their possession. There were foot companies of doctors, and lawyers, and merchants, and shop-keepers. The cavalry were mustered and led by hard-riding country gentlemen who had contrived to raise an additional mortgage on their estate in order to turn out their troop of light dragoons equipped with serviceable accoutrements, and mounted on clever horses. The uniforms were gay and gaudy, and they were likely to remain unsoiled; for the Irish Volunteers had no transport, no commissariat, and no administrative staff; and they were not in a condition to keep the field, or march to a point at any considerable distance

from their homes. But that mattered little; for their real business lay close to hand. Beneath all the show and glitter visible on the surface there was a grim and serious purpose in that citizen army. The serjeants and corporals in the infantry battalions, and almost all the rank and file, were drawn from the farmers and artisans of the Northern counties, who were not accustomed to regard soldiering as an idle and objectless pastime. The Protestants of Ireland, at all periods of their history, have never carried arms except with a more or less definite and declared intention of asserting their own claims, and maintaining their own principles; and in the summer of 1779 almost every Ulsterman who had a Tower musket on his shoulder was prepared to use his weapon in the cause of national independence. An interesting letter, written in confidence for the information of Lord George Germaine, described the majority of the inhabitants on the north of a line drawn from Sligo to Dundalk as staunch Nonconformists, Puritans in creed, and violently attached to Republican sentiments. America was to them a Promised Land of freedom, and of modest but secure prosperity; and they looked to the American insurgents with hope and sympathy, very much as the Roman Catholic population of Ireland looked to the Jacobins of Paris during the earlier years of the French Revolution. Their sentiments were warmly reciprocated on the opposite shore of the Atlantic Ocean. "May the Kingdom of Ireland merit a Stripe in the American Standard!" That toast was drunk, with all the honours, at a banquet held by officers of the Continental army in America; and the Ireland which they had in their minds was not Catholic Connaught, but Protestant Ulster.[1]

[1] *Colonel Adam Hubley's Journal*, kept during an expedition sent against the Seneca Indians to exact retribution for the massacre of Wyoming Valley. The officers in each of the five brigades were allotted a fat ox, and five gallons of spirits, to make merry over the accession of the King of Spain to the American alliance.

Irish Catholics, whether in or out of Ireland, had no love for the American Revolution; and those of them who had emigrated to America showed little inclination to enlist in the Republican army. "It is probable," (we are told on high authority,) "that there were not three hundred real Celts in the whole Continental Line. The rest of the so-called 'Irish' were emigrants, or the children of emigrants, from Ulster, and were of Scotch descent."[1] After the famine of 1846 vast multitudes of Catholic Irishmen found an asylum in America; and their gratitude towards the most hospitable of nations took visible form in the enormous contingents of Irish soldiers who turned out to save the Union in the war of 1861. But in 1775 it was a very different story. Catholics were slow to take service in defence of a cause whose most active supporters were bitterly prejudiced against the Catholic religion. It is not too much to say that the Quebec Act, which legalised that form of worship in the province of Canada, was almost as unpopular in Massachusetts as the Boston Port Act itself; and the New England minutemen, if Washington had permitted it, would have burned the Pope on the Fifth of November at the head of every regiment.

The Irish Volunteers were in any case a most formidable body of men; and they now had the fate of their country at their absolute and exclusive disposal, for on Irish soil there was little or nothing to resist them. Most of the regular troops, who were quartered in the island, had been sent across the Atlantic to reinforce General Howe and General Burgoyne. At a time when the King's Government did not as yet understand the situation in Ireland the Irish arsenals were stripped bare in order to provide firelocks for the Irish Volunteers; and no fewer than fifteen thousand stand of arms, which the Ordnance Department kept in store against an emergency, had been handed over to them in a single

[1] *The Administration of the American Revolutionary Army, by Louis Clinton Hatch;* chapter 7.

batch. The batteries of the Royal Regiment of Artillery were occupied in fighting General Washington and General Gates, or in guarding the Southern coast of England against a possible French invasion; but the Irish Volunteers had a superabundance of cannon to drag about on parade. Their artillery was commanded by Napper Tandy, the popular tribune of Dublin City. Napper Tandy was not a scientific artillerist like General Phillips, nor a heaven-born gunner like young Alexander Hamilton of the Continental Army in America; but, if it ever came to street-fighting, he would have known enough of the ballistic theory to blow in the gate of Dublin Castle. The proportion of armed men to the numbers of the Irish population seemed incredible to foreign military critics who were not acquainted with the martial propensities, and the indomitable, if often misdirected, public spirit of the northern Irishman. Whatever might be the faults and deficiencies of the Volunteers, they presented a marked contrast to those armies of continental Europe which were recruited by crimping, and kept in order by a savage and inquisitorial discipline. They were a national institution, more truly representative than the Parliament itself, — enjoying the confidence, sharing the aspirations, and steadfastly resolved, at all hazards, to enforce the will, of the Irish people.

With such a formidable constituency to keep it up to the mark the Irish Parliament went fast and far. At the opening of the Winter Session of 1779 the King's Speech was met by a unanimous demand for the removal of all restrictions upon the trade and commerce of Ireland. When the amended Address was carried to the Castle the Duke of Leinster's Volunteers stood two deep on either side of the roadway, and presented arms as the Speaker and his escort of members filed past. The Government, — which had not in the whole of Ireland spare bayonets enough to line the market-place of a single county-town in Ulster, let alone the streets of Dublin, — found nothing for it but to yield with the best grace, and the utmost celerity, that the

situation admitted. In the previous February Lord North, speaking on his responsibility as Prime Minister, had announced that no further relaxation of the mercantile code could be granted to Ireland without injuriously affecting the interests of Great Britain. And now, in December of the same year, he treated the House of Commons to a dissertation against commercial monopolies so enlightened and convincing that it might have been written in draft by Adam Smith himself, and moved a Resolution declaring that Ireland had "a free and unlimited right to trade with the whole world." In the course of the following month that Resolution was embodied in a Government Bill which passed through Parliament rapidly, and which would have passed unopposed if Lord George Gordon had not attacked it in a silly speech, and divided against it in a minority of one. Good patriots, who had a touch of ideality, spoke of the measure as a New Year's Gift from the Parliament at Westminster to the sister Parliament in Dublin. "We have the sense," wrote Horace Walpole, "to trespass upon the formalities of Christmas, and for once prefer wisdom to going out of town the moment it is fashionable. Great concessions to Ireland have been adopted, are sailing through both Houses with favourable gales, have been notified to Ireland, and have pleased there, and we trust will restore harmony between these islands." [1]

That was a friendly and generous anticipation; but Ireland still had a long list of grievances to be remedied before she would be in a mood for reconciliation. A Bill had been transmitted from Dublin relieving Irish Nonconformists from the Sacramental Test which debarred them from holding civil or military office. The Bishops had tried in vain to kill the measure in the Irish Privy Council, and their last hope of keeping their fellow-Protestants of the non-established Churches in a state of subjection and humiliation henceforth rested on

[1] Walpole to Mann; Berkeley Square, December 20, 1779.

the Cabinet in England; but the Lord-Lieutenant sent word to Downing Street that the proposed concession was imperatively necessary in the interests of peace and order. In days not long past the smaller tenants of Ulster, under the appellation of Protestant Oakboys, had waged a vigorous tithe-war against the Established Church by storming parsonages, and rabbling rectors and vicars, and carting a live ecclesiastical dignitary, like a stuffed Guy Fawkes, round half the county. Men of the same class, inspired with the same spirit, were now enlisted by scores and hundreds in the ranks of every Volunteer battalion throughout the rural districts of Armagh, Tyrone, and Fermanagh; and the English Ministers, with a Colonial rebellion and two European wars already on their hands, could not venture to neglect the Viceroy's salutary warning. In March 1780 the Test Bill came back from London unaltered in its essential provisions, and the Irish Dissenters were relieved from their disabilities almost half a century before a similar boon was extended to their co-religionists in England.

King George and his Ministers had now given up everything which they were prepared to surrender; but it was soon brought home to them that as yet they had only been playing with the fringe of the Irish question. On the nineteenth of April 1780 Henry Grattan moved a series of Resolutions laying down the doctrine that "no power on earth but the King, Lords, and Commons of Ireland was competent to make laws for Ireland." A staid and unimaginative Englishman, when he reads the praises bestowed on Grattan's oration by Grattan's own compatriots, can with difficulty rise to the height of credence to which he is invited to soar; but, making every allowance for the emotions of the audience, it must have been almost as forcible and impassioned, and quite as sincere, a speech as ever was heard in that or any other parliament. From this moment forward the battle was joined on the supreme question of self-government for Ireland, and the contest

was maintained without respite for five-and-twenty live-long months, until it resulted in a complete and overwhelming victory for the national party. The Ministerial wirepullers made unsparing use of the machinery upon which they were accustomed to rely. Among the hundred and fifty-four declared supporters of the Government seventy-eight already lived upon public money; and now, in one and the same session, the Lord-Lieutenant recommended the Prime Minister to ennoble eight commoners, to grant a step in the peerage to thirteen Earls and Barons, to make five new Privy Councillors, and to confer pensions upon seventeen venal politicians. The employment of such devices might secure for the Court a narrow majority on a doubtful division; but it was not the way to conciliate the loyalty of true-hearted Irishmen. Intelligent members of the national party had long regarded the scandalous condition of the Civil List as a disgrace to their country. It had been bad enough in times past, when disreputable women, who had found favour in the eyes of the monarch, were gratified with three thousand a year, and two thousand a year, out of the produce of Irish taxation. George the Third, it was true, had no mistresses; but he permitted and encouraged the lavish outlay of public money on objects not less offensive to national feeling, and incomparably more prejudicial to the national interests. It would have been better, in the view of many a patriot, to have had another Duchess of Kendal, or Madame de Walmoden, quartered upon the taxpayer than to pour out Irish treasure in floods for the purpose of bribing Irish senators to betray the cause of Ireland.

The occupants of Dublin Castle were soon reduced to acknowledge that, when combatants are in deadly earnest, steel is a more potent metal than gold. The country was in a sullen and suspicious humour which would not brook delay or disappointment; and least of all would it tolerate any ill-timed project for bringing Ireland into a closer connection with England. "I shall ever receive," (so the Lord-Lieutenant told one of his

advisers,) "any hints from you either respecting myself immediately, or the business of the public. But let me earnestly recommend you not to utter the word 'Union' in a whisper, or drop it from your pen. The present temper will not bear it." The national party had already imitated some of the revolutionary methods and processes which were in vogue among the American insurgents. Agreements to desist from exporting and consuming English goods had been framed and promulgated by Grand Juries and County Meetings in all the provinces of Ireland, and had been subscribed with many thousands of signatures. Women of every class and rank, from peeresses to sempstresses, had been captured by the prevailing enthusiasm; the military uniforms were all manufactured at home; and more, and ever more of them, were needed daily. Before the event was decided there were a hundred and thirty thousand Volunteers on the rolls, and from forty to fifty thousand present with the colours. A precedent of ominous significance was borrowed from that turbulent and gloomy period of the Great Rebellion in England when the common soldiers in every Parliamentary regiment were represented by elected Agitators, and when the policy of the State was announced in a Declaration of the Army, and carried into execution by a Standing Committee of Army Officers. The descendants of those Cromwellian warriors who were planted as colonists in Leinster and Munster had handed down from father to son the old family traditions of military interference in politics; and they found it easy to indoctrinate the armed Protestants of Ulster with their own ancestral theory of a soldier's duty. A crowd of delegates, chosen and accredited by five-and-twenty thousand of the northern Volunteers, assembled in their blue, and green, and scarlet, and orange uniforms in the great church at Dungannon. After asserting the principle that "a citizen, by learning the use of arms, did not abandon any of his civil rights," they solemnly pledged themselves to pursue and attain the emanci-

pation of Ireland at any risk to their own lives and fortunes. And then, before the Convention was allowed to disperse, they nominated a permanent Committee of four members from every county in Ulster, who were empowered to act in concert with the other Volunteer associations all over Ireland, and to adopt any measures which, in their judgment, each successive phase of the crisis demanded. The situation was one of actual revolution, and potential civil war; for any flagrant indiscretion on the part of the Government would have set Ireland in a blaze which nothing but bloodshed could extinguish. The time had arrived when George the Third and his Ministers might have been expected to order the military occupation of Belfast, as, on far less provocation, they had ordered that military occupation of Boston which was the effective cause of the American Rebellion; but the richest and most powerful monarch that ever ruled could not have treated himself to such an expensive indulgence twice in a lifetime.

CHAPTER XII

VERGENNES AS A WAR MINISTER. JOHN ADAMS IN EUROPE.

During the three-quarters of a century, which had elapsed since William the Third and Mary began to reign, England had been four times at war with France; and on each occasion she had fought the quarrel out. Once, and once only, at the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle in the year 1748, the combatants had parted on equal terms; whereas in 1697, in 1713, and more recently at the Peace of Paris in 1763, England carried off the glory and the spoils, while her opponent retired worsted and humiliated from the fray. In every one of those wars our success owed not a little to the co-operation of numerous and powerful allies on the Continent of Europe. Those allies were not always the same, for there was a frequent change of partners in the dance of diplomacy; but England was never reduced to the predicament of having to face her hereditary enemy single-handed. Spain, Holland, Portugal, Sweden, — Austrian armies under Prince Eugene or Prince Charles of Lorraine, and North German armies under Frederic the Great and Ferdinand of Brunswick, — had at one time or another assisted England in curbing the pride of France. Moreover we then had Ireland for a recruiting ground; and America, with a population increasing rapidly in numbers, in wealth, and in military experience and maritime enterprise, was fast becoming an auxiliary valuable beyond all others in the amphibious warfare which suited our national genius, and which was demanded by our national circumstances. But in the autumn of 1778 the case was sadly altered. We had not a single avowed friend among the Governments of Europe; the Protestants of Ireland, who alone mattered,

were asserting their national independence in arms; and Great Britain had for several years been exerting the whole of her strength in a vain attempt to re-conquer New England and Pennsylvania. In the course of that attempt her means for enlisting soldiers had been exhausted; her commerce was half ruined; one of her generals had been captured with all his followers; and her main army of invasion had been baffled in a fourth, — and, as it eventually turned out, in a last, — campaign against those Northern and Central Colonies which were the focus of the rebellion.

Weakened and fettered by her interminable contest with America, and menaced by the impending hostility of Ireland, our country was now plunged into a life-and-death struggle against France in which the odds, to all appearance, were seriously to her disadvantage. The governing fact in the military and political history of Western Europe during the eighteenth century was the enormous numerical preponderance of the French population over that of any neighbouring State. Ireland apart, Great Britain contained less than seven million of inhabitants of all ages, and both sexes. A careful and authentic analysis of the French community told a very different tale. It was reckoned that in France there were twenty thousand nobles, eighty thousand people who belonged to the "valet-class," and no less than a quarter of a million of "monks, ecclesiastics, and friars." But, — over and above this crowd of idlers and non-producers, — the French King had at his disposal, in time of need, three hundred thousand soldiers; eighty-four thousand seamen, liable to service on board his fleets, were entered on the Register of Marine Conscription; and, after all these deductions had been taken into account, there remained at least four million five hundred thousand Frenchmen "fit for the exercise of arts, commerce, and manufacture."[1] Half again as

[1] That computation was made by a contributor to the London Evening Post. Doctor Price, in the year 1777, estimated the population of France at twenty-six millions.

much money, as compared with England, was annually raised by taxation in France; although more of it was squandered, and something more was consumed in defraying the interest on the national debt, the capital amount of which stood at nearly the same figure in both countries.[1] The inequality in material resources between the antagonists was already sufficiently impressive, and the balance was soon again disturbed in favour of the larger nation. In April 1779 Spain concluded a treaty with France, and declared war against England. The increased gravity of the outlook was admitted by the warmest supporters of Lord North's policy. "Our revenues," said a writer in the Morning Post, "bear no proportion to the united income of the House of Bourbon. We have not more than ten millions of people from whom to draw seamen. They have upwards of three times that number."

England has seldom had a more dangerous and persistent adversary than the Comte de Vergennes, with his fixed idea of dragging her from her exalted place among the nations, and his perfect knowledge of the weak points in her armour. During the ten years preceding 1770 the Duc de Choiseul had used extraordinary industry in obtaining intelligence about the condition of our arsenals, the strength of our naval armaments, the number and the local distribution of our regiments, the military geography of our southern counties, the defensive capabilities of our possessions in the East and West Indies, and, — first and foremost, — about the material resources of our North American colonies, and the political disposition of their inhabitants. His emissaries were selected with rare insight, and he never grudged any expenditure which his purposes demanded. When he fell from office the fruit of his labours passed into the

[1] The principal of the English National Debt, at Midsummer 1775, was a hundred and thirty-six millions of pounds. France came out of the Seven Years' War in 1763 owing a little less than a hundred and thirty millions. *Doctor Richard Price's Supplemental Observations on the Nature and Value of Civil Liberty and Free Government;* Part III, Sections 2 and 3.

custody of Vergennes, who constituted himself the heir of Choiseul's policy, studied his notes and plans, and kept his investigations up to date. The secret reports, and confidential despatches, which the French Minister of Foreign Affairs from time to time placed before the eyes of Louis the Sixteenth at Versailles tell the facts about the British navy much more accurately than the speeches which the First Lord of the Admiralty was in the habit of making at Westminster for the information of the British Parliament.

When the American troubles began Vergennes discerned the opportunity for which Choiseul had been eagerly and vainly waiting. In December 1776, — about the date, if he had known it, that Washington was drawing together his little army with designs upon the Hessian brigade at Trenton, — the French Minister pronounced it as his opinion that General Howe's brilliant success against General Putnam on Long Island was a blessing in disguise for the foes of Great Britain, inasmuch as that victory would embolden Lord North's Cabinet to extract from the House of Commons all the funds necessary for prolonging and embittering a civil war which he characterised as a contest against nature. "France," wrote Vergennes, "may be content to remain a spectator while Englishmen are rending their own empire to pieces. *Our* concern in the matter is that this war should last; and everything indicates that our hopes are well founded." Vergennes was glad to warm his hands at the fire which ravaged his neighbour's premises; but he had no intention of allowing the flame to die down for want of fuel. When the needs and perils of the insurgent colonists became acute he helped them liberally with arms and money; he induced his sovereign to recognise them as a self-governing people; and, when the time was ripe, and nothing less would serve, he threw the sword of France with a resounding clash into the scale of American Independence. Exercising, from first to last, a dominant influence over the conduct of hostilities, he has a fair

title to be accounted among the most famous war-ministers of French history. In one important respect he had a harder task than Marshal Villars before him, or Carnot after him, for he fought England, not in the plains of Flanders or Picardy, but on her own element, in a naval combat which encircled the globe. In the English Channel, in the Gulf of Bengal, in the Caribbean Sea, and in the estuaries which indented the coast of North America, the two leading nations of the world were engaged, during four summers and winters, in a continuous struggle for maritime supremacy, with varying fortune, and for the most part with not very unequal gains and losses. Battles at sea, or on land wholly or partially surrounded by the sea, were lost, and gained, and drawn by Admiral d'Orvilliers, and Admiral de Grasse, and General Rochambeau, and the Bailli de Suffren; and, whether in victory or disaster, the flag of France was upheld with honour.

However stout a fight was made by the French fleets and armies under the auspices of Vergennes, his more personal triumphs were won on another field. In his vocation as Minister of Foreign Affairs for the Crown of France he set himself patiently and deliberately at work to thwart and isolate England; to eject her from the intimate counsels of European nations; to convert her former friends and allies into ill-wishers, and her ill-wishers into open foes. His efforts met with remarkable success, for he was a diplomatist of a high order, exempt from that hankering after petty and immediate, and in many cases nothing better than imaginary, gains and advantages which is the weakest side of the profession. Vergennes saw matters in the large, and with a steadfast eye to a distant and abiding future. When he espoused the cause of the United States he made it a rule for himself to forbear from any action which could shake the confidence, or hurt the self-respect, of the American people. It had long been borne in upon him that, neighbour for neighbour, the

New Englanders very much preferred to see the British, rather than the French, established as masters in the regions which lay north of the St. Lawrence river; and he gave the American Government a solemn assurance that under no circumstances whatever would the King of France attempt, or consent, to resume possession of Canada. He set his face against every proposal to extort from the gratitude of Congress a grant of exclusive privileges to French commerce. France, in his view, had gone to war to destroy the British monopoly of trade with North America, and she could not, with any show of consistency, demand a fresh monopoly of her own to the detriment of the ship-owners and merchants of other European countries. "Monsieur de Vergennes," says that fine historian, Henri Doniol, "inscribed on the banner of France the maxim which he had instilled into the King's Government, of asking nothing but what was just and disinterested from our allies in the New World."

Vergennes had set his heart upon enlisting the Naval Powers of Europe in a combination against the maritime predominance of Great Britain. He exhorted them to throw in their lot with France "in the name of the liberty of the seas;" and in the plainest of language he declared his adherence to the doctrine that free ships made free goods, and that no articles were contraband except arms, equipments, and munitions of war. As soon as hostilities commenced with England he issued a proclamation announcing that, (whatever course the English Cabinet might think fit to pursue,) those were the principles by which the French Cabinet, at all events, would guide its own conduct. It was a master-stroke of policy, which was rewarded by a noteworthy measure of success. The Comte de Vergennes most deservedly stood high in the estimation of his contemporaries, who paid him what was then considered the greatest of compliments by talking of him as the Gallic Chatham. But his fame was speedily relegated to an obscurity the cause of which is not far to seek; for, after a very short

interval of time, the memories connected with the War of American Independence were drowned in the flood of exciting events which the outbreak of the French Revolution let loose upon Europe. Vergennes was soon, and long, forgotten; and, though in recent days the narrative of his diplomatic exploits and achievements has been faithfully, ably, and exhaustively written, his personal history is not presented to the reader in a compendious and accessible form.[1]

The English Minister, whose province it was to uphold the interests of England on the Continent of Europe, was no match for Vergennes. It has been the singular good fortune of our country that her relations with foreign Powers, at several most critical periods of her national history, were taken in hand by a monarch, a general, or a statesman who conducted them with rare vigour and sagacity to a successful issue. The exigencies of the situation at the outbreak of the war with France in the spring of 1778 would have tested the highest qualities of a William the Third, a Marlborough, a Chatham, or a Castlereagh; and the matter was altogether beyond the grasp of the nobleman who was Secretary for the Northern Department in Lord North's Government. Viscount Weymouth had been taken into the Cabinet on account of his usefulness as a debater; for he had caught the tone, and had sedulously practised the style, which the House of Lords preferred, and still prefers, to all others. He could safely be relied on to speak briefly, and to the point, — or at all events to that

[1] Henri Doniol's *Histoire de la Participation de la France à l'Établissement des États Unis d'Amérique* has perhaps never been surpassed in merit as a collection of historical documents lucidly arranged, and admirably explained and illustrated. A fine biography of the Comte de Vergennes might be composed from passages extracted from its pages. But those pages are nearly four thousand in number; and the five quarto volumes, in which the work originally appeared, were of stupendous bulk and weight. Lord Chatham was more fortunate than Vergennes, for his life was written by Macaulay in two essays containing a hundred and fifty pages between them, of which at least a million copies have been bought, and read, by English-speaking people. Chatham could not have fared better if he had been a hero of Plutarch.

one among the points which told in favour of his own contention; but this cheap knack of pleasing his audience, and sitting down at the right moment, was the beginning and end of his statesmanship. His habits of life were incompatible with the requirements of an arduous and responsible office; for he spent his nights drinking glass for glass with his brother Bedfords, who had stronger heads than his, and who passed for hearty fellows while Weymouth was held in disrepute by people of his own rank as a confirmed sot. Of all functions in politics he was least fitted for that which he was called upon to exercise. He had not the seemly reputation, and the lofty character, which impose respect on the Ministers of foreign courts, and on the public opinion of foreign nations; he was unable to command the calm thought, the unshaken nerve, and the ceaseless vigilance which are indispensable for the conception, and the sustained execution, of a great national policy in time of stress and peril; and he was incapable of animating our diplomatic representatives abroad with a spirit of energy and enterprise which he did not himself possess. The Foreign Minister of England, in that day of England's need, was regarded as little better than a nullity in all the Chancelleries of Europe.

Vergennes, well contented with having to deal with such an opponent, was moreover supremely fortunate in the coadjutors who helped him to enlist Europe on the side of France. His most important business fell to be transacted in concert with Benjamin Franklin, to whose qualifications a strong testimonial has been given by no less clear-sighted a judge than Frederic the Great. "This man," said the King, "who is certainly the best head in America, and perhaps in England, has gone to France in order to ascertain for himself what the Colonies are entitled to expect." That sentence was written in December 1776; and, before eighteen months had passed, Franklin knew very well what America might expect from France; and France, and all Europe

also, had learned to know Franklin. His extravagant popularity, his all-pervading influence, his unerring perception, his indefatigable labours, and his rapid and complete success in the principal object of his mission have been told at length in a previous volume;[1] and the story need not be repeated here. The credit arising from the Treaty of Alliance between France and the United States accrued to Franklin, and to Franklin alone; for his fellow Commissioners were men intellectually and morally of a far inferior order. Arthur Lee, whose brains had been turned by his preposterous self-esteem, and who was plotting with his backers and partisans in Congress to supplant his chief at Paris, did a great deal less to help than to hinder; while Silas Deane had never been admitted to the familiar confidence of the French Foreign Office, and now was under orders to return home, and give an explanation of the abstruse pecuniary operations which he had carried on with the French Treasury through the irregular, and rather disrespectable mediation of Beaumarchais. But Franklin was not long left without a colleague worthy of himself, and of the nation which he represented. The French Treaty had been signed in February 1778; and by the second week of April John Adams was already supping with him "on cheese and beer" in his suburban residence at Passy, and was domesticated under his roof in the apartments which Silas Deane had recently occupied.

Adams sailed for Europe in the middle of February. His outfit was of the Spartan kind; but he took with him the universal good-will of Massachusetts, and some parting gifts selected with reference to his probable needs; for one friend had given him a pistol, and another introduced him to a treatise professing to teach the pronunciation of French "in a new, easy, and con-

[1] *The American Revolution;* Volume IV, chapter 38.

cise manner." More richly blessed in an important respect than George Washington, he had with him a son of his own, a child of ten years old, — the second by succession in what a good English writer most justly calls "an illustrious line."[1] The frigate which took him across the ocean captured a vessel laden with a cargo of goods insured at seventy thousand pounds, and carrying guns enough to make something of a fight before she surrendered. Adams, who had contrived to lay hands on a marine's musket, refused to go below deck, and was rather proud at having his head very narrowly missed by a cannon-ball; but he landed on French soil safe and whole. It may well be conceived how the first sight of the Old World affected a man of such extensive and varied reading, and so ardent an imagination, who had hitherto enjoyed few and meagre opportunities for gratifying his sense of the ideal and romantic, and for viewing famous places associated with the history of the past. He had hoped to go ashore at Nantes, which he was anxious to visit "as the scene of the Edict proclaimed by Henry the Fourth so much to the honour and interest of humanity, and revoked by Louis the Fourteenth so much to its disgrace and injury"; but the course of the voyage was diverted by a northerly gale, and Adams disembarked at Bordeaux, where he met a hearty welcome. He was not allowed to proceed on his journey until he had been entertained at a banquet where every toast was greeted with salvoes of artillery, — twenty-one rounds for the King of France; thirteen for the thirteen sepa-

[1] The expression is taken from Professor Goldwin Smith's account of the attitude maintained by Charles Francis Adams in London between the years 1861 and 1865, when that great diplomatist was largely instrumental in preserving the peace between his country and ours. "We were lucky," (wrote Mr. Goldwin Smith,) "in having as the American Ambassador Mr. Adams, whose bearing throughout was excellent, and who, to the pride of aristocracy, could oppose the dignity of an illustrious line." That epithet was worthily applied to the Adamses; for there is perhaps no other instance on record of a family which, over the space of a century and a half, has produced, in direct descent from father to son, four generations of men of such strong and sterling character, such remarkable and recognised talents, and such vigorous longevity.

rate States of America, and thirteen more for the glory and prosperity of those same States as united under one government; twenty-one for the French and American ladies; and again thirteen when the guest of the evening entered his coach to take his departure.

John Adams traversed France with his eyes open, and his judgment cool and unshaken. He saw much which charmed and impressed him, but much also which left him more satisfied than ever with his native country, and especially with his native State, and his native township. Poitou and Touraine, after the sterner and colder landscape of New England, struck his fancy as the garden of the world. "Every part," he wrote, "is cultivated. The fields of grain, the vineyards, the castles, the cities, the parks, the gardens, — every place is beautiful, yet every place swarms with beggars." Adams was amazed by the elegance and magnificence of Versailles; but there too he found no lack of beggars skilled in the higher arts of mendicancy, and bearing august and historic names. When he attended the levee of a Cabinet Minister he passed through room after room filled with a vast number of gentlemen, who had all come to ask something for themselves or for their relations, before he could penetrate to the inner cabinet where the great man stood, "deeply intrenched" in a crowd of deferential subordinates, and high-born place-hunters. It was in singular contrast to what had been his own position as war-minister in the early and thrifty years of the Rebellion, when he had no secretary, and no servant whom he could trust to write a letter, and when he spent half his time in copying out his despatches with his own hand, and in regretting the days when he had never been without three clerks in his office as a barrister.

Adams repaired to Court on an occasion when the King and Queen took their evening meal in public, and was at once singled out from the crush of spectators, and inducted into a place of honour. "I was situated," he said, "with rows of ladies above and below me, on the right hand and on the left, and ladies only. * * *

I found myself gazed at as we in America used to gaze at the Sachems who came to make speeches to us in Congress; but I thought it hard if I could not command as much power of face as one of the Chiefs of the Six Nations, and therefore determined that I would assume a cheerful countenance, enjoy the scene around me, and observe it as coolly as an astronomer contemplates the stars." He watched Marie Antoinette make her supper on one spoonful of soup, while His Majesty eat like a king, — a king of the House of Bourbon, — pretending from time to time to read memorials and petitions which were ostentatiously handed to him by the officers about his person. Adams was pleased at noticing that a monarch, who had been an early and a good friend to America, had "the appearance of a strong constitution, capable of enduring to a great age;" and yet he himself, and his boy likewise, were destined to be the chief rulers of a mighty nation many years, and very many years, after the son of Saint Louis had mounted from the scaffold to heaven. The shrewd and observant Bostonian was not dazzled by the glitter of Versailles, for he was alive to the shameful scandals, and foresaw the terrible political dangers, which lay beneath the surface of that brilliant society. He was surrounded by Ministers who had been started on their career through the favour of one or another of the late King's mistresses; by dukes, and marquises, and judges, and generals, and admirals who had purchased their titles and employments from Madame de Pompadour, and Madame du Barry; and by fine ladies about whose notions of conjugal fidelity, and parental responsibility, John Adams expressed an opinion in very plain language.

The critical faculty was abnormally strong in John Adams, and he had only too keen an eye for the shortcomings of other people. He continued, till very near the end of an immensely prolonged life, to comment with extraordinary force and zest upon the weaknesses and failings of those eminent men who twenty years back,

and thirty years back, had been his fellow-labourers in the cause of American freedom. But, whatever he might say or write in private, he never knowingly allowed his public conduct to be influenced by considerations of personal rivalry. Patriotism, pure and unalloyed, was at all times in his career the essential motive of his political action; and, whenever he was called upon to take a practical decision on a matter affecting the welfare of his country, his finer qualities invariably carried the day. After he was settled in Paris in the April of 1778 he made it his first business to unravel the network of dissension and intrigue which had so long hampered the operations of the Commission; and he very soon came to the conclusion that the faults were all on one side. In the most explicit language, and with a really noble disregard for his own individual interests, he wrote word to the leading men of Congress that they were admirably served by their Chief Commissioner, and that they would do well to recall all Dr. Franklin's colleagues, and reappoint him, with full and uncontrolled powers, as their one and only diplomatic agent in France.

While waiting for the reply, which was nine months in coming, Adams gave a quiet and loyal support to Franklin's policy, and employed his time in making himself generally useful at the embassy. There was scope for his exertions; for he detected several grave abuses, and, (to use the very mildest term,) a total absence of businesslike habits. There was not a letter-book, a minute-book, or an account-book anywhere on the premises. Millions of francs from the French Treasury had come in, and gone out, with no record kept; and disagreeable rumours about the misappropriation of public money had already reached Congress. The mode of existence led by the junior Commissioners had showed very few traces of republican austerity. Arthur Lee had a hotel and stables of his own; and Silas Deane maintained two separate establishments, with carriages, horses, and servants to correspond, at an expense of not much less than six thousand pounds a year. Adams, who

felt that the honour of his country was at stake, took the matter promptly and firmly into his own hands. He instituted a regular system of accountability; and he wrote precise instructions, — and, in case of need, very sharp rebukes, — to the commercial agents of the American Government in Europe. He volunteered to assist the Chief Commissioner in dealing with an enormous and heterogeneous mass of private correspondence; a labour which was beguiled and enlivened by the amusement of having the run of Doctor Franklin's letter-bag.[1] And he scrupulously returned the visits made to Passy by American gentlemen resident in Paris, who had already begun to complain, as American gentlemen have complained ever since, that they did not receive due attention from the diplomatic representatives of their country in a foreign capital. His industry in this respect was the more creditable because Doctor Franklin, who at his age was no great walker, "had almost daily occasion for the carriage;" and John Adams was determined not to put the public at the expense of providing a second equipage for his own exclusive use.

Adams, with a passion for self-improvement very rare in a middle-aged statesman, lost no time in preparing himself for the exalted functions and responsibilities which were almost certainly in store for him. He devoted every moment which he could snatch from his numerous avocations, or dock off from his hours of sleep, to a sturdy and systematic grapple with the difficulties of the French tongue. His progress was proportioned to his efforts. He mastered the language of diplomacy; and, (when the occasion should arise,) he had the force of will to be master of the diplomatists who spoke it. Before the year was out he could hold

[1] In July 1778 Adams informed a friend in America that he had thrown into the grate a long letter, claiming to be written with the privity of the King of England, and proposing that the American colonies should be governed by an American House of Lords in which Washington, Hancock, Franklin, and Adams would all have seats. "Doctor Franklin," said Adams, "sent an answer in which they have received a dose that will make them sick."

his own in an argument, and catch the point of an anecdote, as freely and readily as a lifelong votary of Parisian society. He had soon reached the stage at which he became conscious of Franklin's deficiencies in accent, and grammar, and idiom; for it must be admitted that the Doctor delighted his company by what he said in French, rather than by the French in which he said it. Adams had every opportunity for educating his ear, and exercising his tongue. He dined abroad frequently, selecting from an overwhelming multitude of invitations those houses where talk flowed and sparkled in the most generous abundance; and it may well be believed that the Paris theatre was a revelation of charm and emotion to a man of keen sensibility who had been born and bred in a community where the drama was a forbidden pleasure. It was at the theatre that John Adams saw Voltaire for the first, and almost for the last, time. The Patriarch, who was now very old indeed, felt the faintest possible interest in the American Revolution. Even Frederic the Great, who, when writing to his other correspondents, was inexhaustible on the subject of George the Third's colonial policy, made rare and slight mention of America in his letters to Voltaire. Voltaire, moreover, had for some while past been engaged in a war with England on his own account, which occupied his thoughts almost to the entire exclusion of other topics; for, — with that intensity of purpose which was characteristic of him in things petty and great, — he was bent upon persuading the Academy to condemn Shakespeare as "a buffoon with occasional happy inspirations," unworthy of being ranked with Corneille, Racine, and Molière. But no prominent Frenchman could altogether escape the obligation of paying his tribute to American liberty. In the last week of April 1778 Adams attended a ceremonial banquet at the Academy of Sciences, where a general demand arose that Monsieur Voltaire and Monsieur Franklin should salute each other in French fashion. With visible, and rather comical, reluctance

the two veterans were induced to fall for one short moment upon each other's necks; and the spectators shouted with rapture "at the sight of Solon embracing Sophocles."

That twelvemonth in France, busy as it was, constituted the nearest approach to a holiday which Adams had enjoyed for twenty years past, or was fated to enjoy for five-and-twenty years to come. In February 1779 the answer to his important despatch of the previous May arrived from Philadelphia. Congress accepted his advice in its entirety, and appointed Doctor Franklin its sole minister at the French Court. Nothing was arranged about the position of Adams himself; and the disposal of his future had apparently been left to his own judgment, and his own inclination. Franklin would have been very glad to keep him in Paris, where, like Silas Deane before him, he might have paid himself any salary he chose, with no questions asked. But John Adams had other views of public duty, and private dignity. "I cannot," (he wrote to his wife,) "eat pensions and sinecures. They would stick in my throat." He set out at once for Nantes, where he stayed three weary months waiting for a convoy, — long enough, (he complained,) for him to have made a sentimental journey, after the fashion of Sterne, over the whole kingdom of France. Then he went back to his frugal home, and his unremunerated public labours, in America. But Congress could not be easy in its mind until its favourite son was once again in Europe. The feeling with regard to Adams was still the same as had been expressed two years before by the members of the Committee of Foreign Affairs when they told him that Doctor Franklin's age alarmed them, and that they wanted "a man of inflexible integrity" to assist, — and, if any accident happened, to replace, — that famous public servant. Adams deserved the confidence of his fellow-countrymen, for by this time he had given himself a thorough education in all the essential requirements of an international statesman. In the autumn of

1779 he was nominated by Congress to be "Minister Plenipotentiary for negotiating a Treaty of Peace, and a Treaty of Commerce, with Great Britain, when that nation should be willing to recognise the independence of the United States;" and he was further entrusted with a roving commission to promote, at his own discretion, the general interests of America in Europe.[1] He made a rapid, and rather dangerous, voyage to Corunna in a leaky frigate, and a slow, and exceedingly uncomfortable, journey by land through the Northern provinces of Spain. In February 1780 he rejoined Franklin at Paris, where he soon discovered that, in the existing condition of Europe, there was plenty of work to occupy the energies of two strenuous people.

Great Britain and Holland were bound by an ancient treaty which provided that, if one of the contracting parties should ever be engaged in hostilities with a third country, the ordinary rules of maritime law should not be enforced as between Dutchmen and Englishmen; and it was agreed and understood that the merchants of either Power might trade during time of war with the enemies of the other. That compact dated from the period when those two nations, — the most prosperous, enterprising, and liberty-loving communities of the then world, — were united in sympathy by their opposition to the greed and violence of Louis the Fourteenth; and Lord Chatham, in the Seven Years' War, had scrupulously acted in accordance with its stipulations. But Chatham was dead, and wisdom seemed to have died with him. The example of his policy was scouted by Lord North and Lord Sandwich; and, from the spring of 1778 onwards, Dutch merchantmen were overhauled, and searched, and ransacked, and carried into Portsmouth or Plymouth with a prize-crew on board,

[1] On his return to France Adams asked leave from Vergennes to take up his abode in Paris, as a convenient centre for transacting the business which had brought him across the seas. "I am not," he wrote, "confined by commissions, nor instructions, nor by any intimations from Congress to reside in any one place in Europe more than another."

more rigorously and systematically than the trading-vessels of any other people. The feeling among the Dutch ship-owners grew very bitter; and the war party in Holland, (for a war party there was,) were not behindhand with reprisals. A series of mutual insults, and mutual injuries, roused the animosity of both nations to a heat which could no longer be endured with patience; and before the end of 1780 Great Britain and Holland were at open war. "There has," (wrote a London journalist,) "scarce been anything near so much of bustle upon the Change, for more than thirty years, as yesterday. The proclamation concerning the Dutch war was in everybody's mouth; and long faces, and shrugs of the shoulders, were the chief answers to the various interrogations that were made as to the consequences that were likely to ensue." Such was the effect which the startling news produced upon quiet and industrious people whose ambition it was to live by selling their own wares, instead of by capturing the ships, and confiscating the property, of others; but the fashionable tone in Admiralty circles was triumphant, and even insolent. There was a scent of prize-money in the air; and the cue had been given by the First Lord himself, who informed all and sundry that, time out of mind, the treachery and covetousness of the Dutch had always been equalled only by their cowardice. History is cognisant of another Lord Sandwich, the famous sailor of the Restoration, who fought the fleets of Holland with varying fortune, but constant heroism, until he met a glorious and awful death in battle; and that Lord Sandwich would most certainly have told a very different story.

Proof was soon to be given that Dutch seamen had not degenerated since those rough and stubborn days; nor English seamen either. The naval war between George the Third and the Bourbon Powers, which arose out of the American Revolution, was ruinously wasteful of money, but comparatively inexpensive in the matter of life and limb. It was well observed at the time that

the longest lists of killed and wounded, in proportion to the crews, occurred in duels between frigates and privateers rather than in general engagements between fleets and squadrons. Sir Edward Hughes, and the Bailli de Suffren, sometimes got to closer grips in East Indian waters; but in the Mediterranean Sea, and on the Atlantic Ocean, French and English admirals played at long bowls until Rodney at last anticipated Nelson's dashing and decisive tactics, and threw a new spirit into the game. And therefore the world was all the more impressed by the fierce intention, and the unflinching tenacity, displayed on either side in the protracted naval action on the Dogger Bank. Not a gun was discharged by Englishman or Dutchman until the adversaries were within pistol-shot; and pistols in those days had a short range. The British commander-in-chief placed himself abreast of the hostile flag-ship, the Admiral de Ruyter, which on that occasion did honour to its name; and the cannon roared without intermission for three hours and forty minutes. At last the Dutch sheered off, and it was with difficulty that they were kept afloat until "separately, and in the utmost distress, they reached such of their own nearest ports as they could first fetch." The Hollandia, a fine ship of sixty-eight guns, went to the bottom in the night; and her pennant remained flying from the top-mast above the surface of the water till it was secured as a trophy by one of the English frigates. The rigging of our larger men-of-war was so cut to tatters that they lay like logs upon the waves, and were altogether incapable of effective pursuit. Their crews had suffered heavily; and their own cannon had been pointed so low, and served so briskly, that the Dutch hulls were riddled through and through, and their decks were heaped with dead. The incidents of the battle sent a thrill of stern pride through England, and through Holland as well. King George paid a visit of compliment in his State Barge to Admiral Parker at the Nore, and Londoners came down the river in large parties to treat the sailors, and count the shot-holes in

the sides of the flag-ship; while the Dutch Government issued a message of thanks to their fleet, conferred a medal on their admiral and his captains, and granted a gratuity of two months' pay to every man who had been present in the action. And in both countries there was heard a frank expression of regret that two brave nations, whom Providence had meant for friends, should expend their valour and endurance in shooting each other to pieces.[1]

Serious as were the grievances which had led to hostilities between Holland and England it was by no means certain that those hostilities would long continue. The Dutch Ministers had not as yet concluded a formal alliance with America, and they were indeed officially supposed to be unaware that any such nation as the United States existed. The conduct of foreign affairs had long been a burning question in Dutch politics; and it was a burning question still. The Stadtholder, nurtured in the great traditions of the House of Orange, was a firm friend to England; and his personal and family influence was very powerful among the rural aristocracy, and the people of the lesser Provinces. On the other hand, what was left of the old republican party, — a party associated with the heroic and tragical memories of de Ruyter, and the de Witts, — was very strong in the commercial cities; and the leaders of that party looked to France for sympathy and support. The breaking out of the English war had given those leaders the upper hand in the counsels of the State; but they did not feel secure of their position until they had com-

[1] "The late bloody engagement in the North Sea affords a specimen of the intrepid and furious manner of fighting of both nations. It were greatly to be wished that this might be the first and last battle between the fleets of two States who by nature and interest are, and by sound policy ought to be, joined together heart and hand to fight against the hereditary enemy of both States, and the common disturber of the peace." That passage is taken from the Whitehall Evening Post. The author of the *History of Europe*, in the Annual Register, says more briefly that "those nations contend with the greatest animosity whose interest it is never to contend at all."

mitted their country to an irreconcileable quarrel with George the Third and his government by publicly recognising the independence of America, and with this end in view they desired to have a confidential agent of the United States in permanent residence at the Hague.

The situation, from the point of view of America, needed a master-hand to cope with it; and there was an American now in Europe who was equal to the task. On New Year's Day 1781 John Adams received from the President of Congress his nomination as Minister Plenipotentiary to the United Provinces. He at once crossed the frontier, and laid before the Dutch Government a memorial soliciting recognition as the representative of a self-governing and independent nation. The practical and straightforward Bostonian, accustomed in his own country to direct dealing with intelligent and self-respecting people of all classes in society, was determined to get into close personal contact with the public opinion of Holland. His course of action in this respect was shocking to the somewhat hide-bound official hierarchy of Europe; and even the Comte de Vergennes warned him that an appeal to popular feeling on the part of an ambassador was a proceeding unheard of in diplomacy. But John Adams knew well what he was about; and nowhere else, and at no time in his career, was he ever more busily and successfully occupied than during those fifteen months which he almost continuously passed in Holland. It was a country where he felt himself at home. The air of industry and prosperity, the neatness and cleanliness, the doors and shutters of brightly painted wood, and the avenues of young trees in the village streets, reminded him of much that he had left behind in New England; and he saw no cause why, in his political transactions with Dutchmen, he should not use the processes which he had always employed when doing public business with his fellow-citizens in America.

When the time approached for the States General to take his Memorial into consideration John Adams com-

menced a succession of formal visits to the chief officers and deputies of each city,—reasoning with them, and exhorting them, in as plain and energetic language as if they were the Selectmen of a Massachusetts township. The contagion of his enthusiasm evoked a manifestation of popular sentiment which soon enveloped the entire confederacy. Petitions were framed and signed by the municipalities of the great towns, urging the Provincial States, to which they severally belonged, to pronounce themselves in favour of American Independence. The States of Friesland were the first to obey the call of their constituents; their example spread like wild-fire throughout the country; and, under the pressure of an irresistible national command, the States General proceeded to act. On the nineteenth of April 1781,—six years to a day after the battle of Lexington,—the Assembly of their High Mightinesses resolved that Mr. Adams should be admitted and acknowledged in the quality of Envoy of the United States of North America. In that capacity he laid the foundation for a treaty of commerce and amity between his own country and Holland, which the Dutch negotiators, after their leisurely fashion, took eighteen months to complete; and within a much shorter space of time he obtained a loan of five millions of guilders from the capitalists of Amsterdam. The effect upon the reputation of John Adams was great and general in all the leading countries of Europe. He recounts in his private diary how, when he made his first appearance at Versailles after his return to France, he was serenaded by the courtiers with a concert of flattering epigrams in an ascending scale of eulogy,—from the gentleman who congratulated him on having proved that Americans were as great in negotiation as in arms, to the gentleman who hailed him as the Washington of diplomacy. "This," he wrote, "is the finishing stroke. It is impossible to exceed this. Compliments are the study of this people, and there is no other so ingenious at them." The descendants of John Adams were brought up in the knowledge that he regarded the success of his Dutch

expedition as the greatest triumph of his life. It was the preface to a long series of notable diplomatic exploits, culminating on the day when, as representative of the United States of America at the British Court, he addressed Queen Charlotte in a few carefully phrased and stately sentences by which Her Majesty had the good sense, and right feeling, to express herself as touched and pleased.[1]

[1] This most interesting exchange of lofty, and not insincere, compliments, which took place on the ninth of June 1785, is given in the volume of *Old Family Letters, copied from the Originals for Alexander Biddle*, and published at Philadelphia in 1892.

CHAPTER XIII

THE LEAGUE OF NEUTRALS. THE PLIGHT OF THE NATION.

VERGENNES, in one important respect, was the most fortunate of all statesmen who ever conceived, and directed, an ambitious foreign policy; for he had the cleverest of mankind, and of womankind also, to second his endeavours. While on the one hand he acted in concert with Benjamin Franklin, and John Adams, the two typical representatives of an approaching democratic era, on the other hand he enjoyed the ardent co-operation of Frederic the Great, and Catherine the Second, — two despotic monarchs whose names will be remembered till the end of time as the very personification of political ability and worldly success.

Frederic the Great wished well to America because he wished ill to George the Third; and, if he had given vent to his grudge against the King of England by openly espousing the claims of the revolted colonists, he would have carried the public opinion of Germany with him. Germany, divided administratively between an almost countless multitude of petty dynasties, was beginning to feel the influence of a common national sentiment whenever the national mind was strongly excited by an interest in external events. The trend of German thought was everywhere visible in that native literature which the greatest of German rulers held in such light account. "A language," (so King Frederic wrote to d'Alembert,) "only deserves to be studied for the sake of the good authors who have made it famous, and good authors we have none; although, when my time comes to walk in the Elysian Fields, I shall be able to recommend myself to the Swan of Mantua by

bringing to his notice the fables of Gellert, and the idyls of a German named Gessner." But a more genuine and virile school of literature than that of Gessner and Gellert was already at work throughout the Fatherland; and the intellectual product of the age was deeply coloured by a passion for liberty both in Europe, and beyond the seas. Klopstock the veteran poet of his nation, Herder in the prime of his powers, and Schiller in the youthful vigour of his splendid reputation, idealised the American character, envied what they regarded as the purity and simplicity of American manners, and were fervent partisans of American independence. Lessing, for all that he was State Librarian to the Duke of Brunswick, had the manliness publicly to protest against the sending of German soldiers across the ocean to crush a young nationality with which Germany had no cause of quarrel. "I would say more," (Lessing added,) "for the people are thirsting to hear the truth; but silence is commanded by the sovereign whom I serve." And Goethe, with the insight of genius, had pronounced the obscure and remote incident, generally known as the Boston massacre, to be a central date in the history of the world; and from that time forward, till the end of his very long life, he was in the habit of estimating the probable success of every great national movement by its likeness or dissimilarity to the spirit and methods of the American Revolution.[1]

Frederic, a true German at heart, felt a patriot's disgust for the practice of selling the sons of Germany to be military serfs of a foreign potentate; but he had no inclination whatever to go crusading on behalf of American liberty. He had just emerged, scatheless and

[1] The feeling in Germany is described in the second chapter of Mr. Bancroft's Introduction to his *Collection of State Papers from the French Archives*. Far and away his best book, it had the honour of being translated, and published in French, by the Comte de Circourt. Bancroft, as a young man, had been to all intents and purposes a German student at the University of Göttingen; and he knew Goethe intimately.

triumphant, from a war which he had most reluctantly undertaken in order to preserve Bavaria from the rapacity of Austrian ambition. Vast armies had faced each other for many months in Bohemia and Silesia. There had been manœuvres and counter-manœuvres, which led in some cases to a few paltry skirmishes; but Frederic, to the intense disappointment of his younger generals and colonels, had attained the object of his efforts without a battle, and without disbursing half as much money as King George contrived to throw away over each of his unsuccessful campaigns against the American insurgents. Frederic's old sword was now once again in the scabbard; and there he was determined that it should remain. He had long ago had his fill of fighting; and he was obsessed, and almost haunted, by a horror of war, and supremely indifferent to that which men, with less experience than himself of the stern and terrible reality, affected to regard as its glory and its joy. "Let the French," he said, "if they can manage to exterminate the English, perform their Te Deums in Notre Dame, and sing psalms about the tongues of their dogs being red with the blood of their enemies. In the peaceful regions which I inhabit we leave all such incantations to Hurons and cannibals." "The scene in America," (he elsewhere wrote,) "reminds me of those gladiatorial combats which the Romans watched with calm and pitiless amusement. I fought in the Circus quite long enough. It is now the turn for others." With this resolution implanted in his breast Frederic persistently declined to join the coalition against England. He did not abstain from unfriendly and disobliging acts which the English Government was too much harassed and preoccupied openly to resent; but he altogether repudiated the notion of emptying his treasury, and mobilising his army, in defence of American freedom. Like Prince Bismarck after him, he flatly refused to hazard the life of a single Pomeranian grenadier for the prosecution of an object which did not immediately affect the interests of Prussia.

He kept the diplomatic emissaries of Congress at arm's length, — which in itself was no easy matter. He withheld from them his permission to borrow money in Berlin; and the most generous concession which their importunity could extract from his Ministers was a promise that His Majesty would not be the last power in Europe to recognise their national independence.[1] Frederic, after his own ironical fashion, was a man of his word. He undoubtedly was not the last to recognise the independence of America; but it cannot be denied that he postponed recognition until Great Britain herself had set him the example.

King Frederic's fighting days were over; but none the less his ill-will was a very formidable disadvantage to any contemporary sovereign unfortunate enough to have incurred his displeasure. The position which he had won for himself in the European world is described by an unexceptionable witness of high capacity, and with good opportunities for observation. James Harris, afterwards the first Earl of Malmesbury, was British Minister at Berlin during the early stages of the American Revolution. Already, at the age of four-and-twenty, he had entered the second lap of a brilliant career in the race for honour. As a mere youth, when in charge of the embassy at Madrid, he had gained the confidence of our Foreign Office by his admirable handling of the controversy relating to the Falkland Islands; and he continued to serve his country with unbroken success until the day when he was pronounced by no less an authority than Prince Talleyrand to have been the ablest British diplomatist of his very able generation. Harris was an English statesman of the fine old school, sparing of emotion, and unsensational in his style of speech and writing; and the information contained in his official despatches may be accepted as the plain truth, and nothing over. In the year 1776 he transmitted to the Secretary of State a confidential account of the feeling

[1] The Baron de Schulenberg to Arthur Lee; Berlin, December 18, 1779.

entertained by Prussians towards their veteran monarch, whom he himself did not greatly love. "They consider," he said, "a word, or smile, from His Majesty as a boon; and, by never rewarding them according to their merits, they are taught to believe they have no merit at all. The superior endowments nature has given him, and the pre-eminence which he constantly affects, make them look up to him as a divinity." A precisely similar effect was produced upon all foreigners, from Royalty downwards, who came within the attraction of Frederic's company and conversation. "I never," (so Harris wrote,) "heard of any man so endued with the gift of persuasion as His Prussian Majesty." The preparations at Potsdam, for the reception of the most eminent visitors, were judged by the English ambassador to have been trumpery and sordid; and yet the King evinced no uneasiness on that account in the presence of his guests, sure as he was, "from his own reputation, and from the minds on which he was to operate, that a smile from him will have more effect than the expending of all the money in his coffers." [1]

Personal contact was not needed in order to bring men under the spell of King Frederic's personal influence. His predominance in Europe had been acquired by an immense effusion of human blood, and it was now maintained by a lavish consumption of a less costly fluid. Opinions have differed with regard to his merits as a poet and an historian, and his excursions into the field of literature have been criticised with unsparing severity; but no author of any mark, and most certainly no author who himself has been a statesman and an administrator, ever failed to admit that Frederic the Great's private letters possessed the inestimable quality of being adapted to secure the object for which they were written. They came with authority from the pen of one who was the master of two hundred thousand soldiers, the owner of a

[1] Mr. Harris to Lord Suffolk; Berlin, 18th March, and 27th July, 1776.

treasure in gold equal to three times the annual revenue of his kingdom, and the victor of Rossbach, Zorndorff, and Leuthen; — and at the same time they were models of vigour and wit, of penetrating intuition, and profound, if dearly bought, knowledge of human nature. Frederic kept the European world in his own way of thinking by a continuous stream of brief and bright notes, or copious epistles, which it amused him to write, and which were read with pleasure and conviction. He corresponded regularly, and often, with his own ambassadors abroad, with the leading ministers of foreign governments, with the most distinguished of those French philosophers who moulded the thought of the epoch, and with royal ladies not a few; for the relentless satirist of Madame de Pompadour, and Elizabeth of Russia, could be courteous, and even charming, to women whose talents he admired, or whose character he respected. Whatever else his letters might contain they were pretty sure to be freely sprinkled with cutting remarks about the American policy of Lord North and his brother ministers, with sarcastic comments on their primitive notions of military strategy, and with marvellously accurate predictions as to the final issue of the struggle. Nor was the King of England himself treated with the indulgence which royalty is supposed to owe to royalty; for Frederic's biting denunciations of George the Third closely resemble the most telling passages in the Declaration of Independence, selected with an eye to literary effect, and seasoned with Gallic salt. Frederic's correspondents were too proud of his confidence to keep his letters to themselves. His compact and pointed sayings, and his irreverent epigrams, soon made themselves wings across the ocean; and every expression of his contempt for German princes, who sold their troops to fight against American liberty, was eagerly welcomed in Puritan New England, where he had long been admired as the champion of Protestantism against Catholic Austria, and among the Germans of Pennsyl-

vania, who worshipped him as their national hero.[1] The Prussian monarch, and the Republicans of the New World, were united by the most binding of all ties, — their detestation of a common enemy. The gratitude of Americans towards Frederic the Great was cheaply earned, and has lasted to this very hour. He ran no risks, and made no sacrifices, for their cause, and he was apt to forget their very existence as soon as they had ceased to serve his purpose;[2] and yet room has been found for his statue at Washington, while the unfortunate King of France, who went to war for America with consequences which ultimately were fatal to his own life, and his own dynasty, has had no monument erected to his memory in any American town or city.

There was no country in Europe where Frederic's influence counted for more than in Russia. The foreign policy of the Empress Catherine had long been watched with tremulous anxiety by both parties in the great controversy that shook the world. Impregnable against foreign invasion; containing an apparently inexhaustible supply of docile, brave, and hardy soldiers; abounding in all the materials required for the construction and equipment of navies before the days of steam, — Russia by herself would have been a formidable enemy, and a valuable ally, even if unsupported by those smaller Northern powers which obeyed her guidance, and were her satellites in peace and war. The resources of that vast community were at the absolute disposal of the reigning monarch. There was no check on Catherine's autocratic will except the opinion, and inclinations, of the courtiers by whom she was surrounded; and it was well worth the while of any foreign government to send the best man on whom it

[1] *Frederick the Great and the United States;* by J. G. Rosegarten, Lancaster, Pennsylvania, 1906.

[2] "I am now so busy with Bohemia, and Saxony, and Silesia, and Moravia that I hardly so much as remember there are Americans in the world." King Frederic to the Dowager Queen of Denmark; 12 September, 1778.

could lay its hand to represent its policy, and push its interests, at St. Petersburg. Harris was accordingly transferred thither from Berlin, and he did not relish the change. The Russian climate was worse than trying, and the times were such that he never ventured to apply for leave of absence from his post. He could not live anywhere near within his salary in a society where incomes were enormous, and hospitality profuse; and where claret and champagne, and fine clothes, and good furniture, and handsome carriages, and trained domestics were exotic luxuries imported at a fabulous cost. But the principal cause of his discomfort was the moral, rather than the material, aspect of the things around him; for the interior of the Russian Court, (to use his own words,) was one continued scene of debauchery, iniquity, and corruption.[1] An affectionate husband, whose wife was everywhere his companion, and a clean-minded gentleman, he was disgusted and sickened by the particular form of tattle and gossip which then constituted the party politics of the Russian capital. It may have been bad enough for a respectable diplomatist at Versailles to feel himself under the necessity of observing the humours, and flattering the vanity, of Louis the Fifteenth's mistresses; but the Court of Catherine the Second swarmed with a yet more scandalous, and a far more numerous, tribe, — the lovers, and ex-lovers, and lovers on pension, and lovers on probation, of Her Imperial Majesty. It was to the honour of Sir James Harris that he served his country gallantly and faithfully, and not altogether unsuccessfully, without soiling his fingers in that mire. "I have," he wrote, "a sufficient sense of the character with which I am invested not to commit it by mixing in any of the disgraceful intrigues with which I am surrounded, and for the embarking in which I find myself radically improper."[2]

[1] Mr. Harris to Sir Joseph Yorke; Petersburg, 1st May, Old Style, 1778.

[2] Harris to the Earl of Suffolk; Petersburg, 20th (31st) July, 1778.

Sir James Harris, in his confidential despatches, more than once remarked upon the extraordinary contrast between the aspect of Russia as surveyed from within, and from without. Those, (he said,) who were behind the scenes at St. Petersburg, were astounded at the dishonesty and inefficiency of the administration; while, on the other hand, "to those who live out of Russia, and who only can form their judgment of the Russian court from the great events which its interference and weight everywhere produce, it must appear as if it was conducted with superior judgment, and defective in no one essential point." The solution of the problem lay in the personal qualities of Catherine herself, who to a masculine coarseness and audacity in vice united a masculine force of mind, and a masculine obstinacy in adhering to a plan, and intrepidity in the execution of it. The great good fortune of the Empress, (so the English ambassador reported,) joined to her resolution and her parts, might always be relied upon to compensate for the dearth in Russia of skilled generals and expert statesmen. No higher compliment was ever paid to our own Elizabeth.[1]

Harris had been glad to escape from Berlin; but he found, to his sorrow, that he was not yet quit of Frederic. The predilection for the King of Prussia was so strong in official circles at St. Petersburg that His Majesty's course of action, at any given crisis, was an unfailing indication of the measures which were sure to be ultimately adopted by the Russian Government.[2] Russian Princes and Field Marshals, who had been on their travels, seldom failed to return from Potsdam infatuated by Frederic's "affability and goodness," and as firmly devoted to Prussian interests as the most loyal of his Prussian subjects.[3] Their admiration for Frederic did not displease their own royal mistress, who, with all her faults, was not prone to petty jealousy. The concord

[1] Harris to Sir Joseph Yorke; Petersburg, 2nd (13th) February, 1778.
[2] Harris to Sir Robert Murray Keith; Petersburg, 27th February, O.S., 1778.
[3] Harris to Lord Suffolk; Berlin, 27th July, 1778.

between the rulers of Russia and Prussia was of old date, and based on firm foundations. There was a difference between their ages of seventeen years, in the contrary direction from that which Catherine the Second usually sought in the case of her male friendships; and something which nearly approached the filial might be observed in her attitude towards Frederic. Thirty years before he had been the patron and military chief of her father, an insignificant prince in Northern Germany; he had engineered for her the august and exalted marriage which, though certainly no love-match either then or afterwards, was the starting-point of her immense career; and he had sanctioned the young bride's change of religion to the Greek Church with an amused indifference which was all his own. From the time that Catherine assumed the sceptre her relations with the Prussian King steadily increased in cordiality, and mutual confidence. The pair regarded themselves as set apart from the common run of sovereigns; both of them thoroughly and intimately understood their own, and the other's, interests; and they knew that they had far more to gain by hearty co-operation than by senseless rivalry. They already had been partners, — and, when they saw occasion for it, accomplices and fellow-conspirators, — in enterprises of great moment of which some were laudable, and almost all were lucrative. More especially they shared between them the dark and secret memories connected with their partition of Poland, — an incomplete operation which, if it only had stopped at that earliest stage, would have been infinitely less of a calamity both for the spoiler and the despoiled.

For some while after the American question had forced itself upon the notice of the world Catherine's sympathies were on the balance; but her views gradually assumed shape and consistence, and she eventually embarked upon a carefully considered, and very original, line of policy which had a potent, and an ever growing, effect upon the course and issue of the war. Like other great and famous personages in ancient and

modern history she cherished a favourite theory which she pursued with the ardour of a devotee, and the minute and patient industry of a specialist. Intent upon her aggressive schemes against the Mohammedans she did her utmost on system to remain at peace with the Christian Powers, — or those which passed for such, — on the Continent of Europe; and, if war broke out between any of these Powers, she made it her vocation to defend the privileges and immunities of all nations, great and small, which had refrained from taking an active part in the conflict. Catherine possessed a solid knowledge of international law; and, whenever the mistress of so many legions thought fit to raise a legal point in favour of neutrals, the jurists of the belligerent nations were bound to give her a respectful hearing.[1]

In the late winter of 1779 an occasion arose when the Empress was called upon to show her mettle. A Russian trader, chartered for Malaga, and laden with wheat, had been intercepted off the coast of Andalusia by the Spanish cruisers. On the pretext that her cargo had been destined to revictual the English garrison of Gibraltar the vessel was carried into Cadiz, the corn was sold by public auction, and the crew imprisoned. When the news reached St. Petersburg Catherine ordered fifteen line-of-battle ships, and five frigates, to be got ready for sea; and Prince Potemkin, who was a warm friend of England, assured Sir James Harris, "with an impetuous joy, analogous to his character," that the fleet was being fitted out with the express object of chastising the Spaniards, whose insolence, and arbitrary behaviour, Her Imperial Majesty would not tolerate. There was surprise and vexation at Potsdam, and nothing short of a panic in the Cabinet of King

[1] Catherine's legal acquirements were not confined to the pages of Vattel. In the summer of 1779 she honoured Sir James Harris by holding with him a long conversation on English gardening, "in which," he wrote, "the Empress is a great adept. From this we got to Blackstone, where she soon had me out of my depth; as I believe she would many a Circuiter, being most perfectly mistress of our laws and Constitution."

Louis the Sixteenth. If Russia fell foul of Spain, the naval coalition against England would be in evil case. Frederic promptly took the matter in hand, and exerted himself as strenuously as if his own kingdom was in peril. He wrote to Versailles that everything depended upon instant and full reparation being made to Russia for the insult offered to her flag; and his letter, — a more forcible document than any despatch likely to be concocted in the French Foreign Office, — was very judiciously passed on to Madrid, where it at once brought the Spanish Government to reason and repentance. And then the King of Prussia, striking while the iron was hot, took care in his communications with Russia to point the moral of the incident. He warmly applauded the readiness shown by the Empress Catherine to defend the rights of neutrals by force of arms; but he begged her to keep in mind that England, and not Spain, was the tyrant of the seas.

The King of Prussia for many months past had been exhorting the Northern Courts to resent and resist the high-handed proceedings of the British Admiralty. Every government, (he said,) which possessed a mercantile navy should take active measures for its protection, and should refuse to abandon the property of its subjects to the "brigandage and cupidity" of these domineering islanders.[1] That was violent language; but it was none too strong for those to whom it was addressed. The trade of all States on the coasts of the Baltic, and the North Sea, had been more than half ruined by a war in which they themselves were not engaged as principals. A Danish or Swedish merchantman, with hemp, or tar, or timber, or grain on board, — and those were the staple commodities of the North of Europe, — was always liable to be stopped, and searched, by a British frigate. The question whether the goods were contraband was decided offhand by a post-captain with no legal training, who was arbiter in a cause which

[1] Frederic to the Queen Dowager of Denmark; January 1, 1779.

nearly concerned his own pocket, and his own reputation at Whitehall as a smart and zealous officer; and, if his judgment was unfavourable, the unlucky vessel was taken by a prize crew into a British port. Remonstrances poured in through the ordinary diplomatic channels from Copenhagen, and Stockholm, and Hamburg, and Lübeck, and Bremen; but no satisfaction could be obtained from the English Foreign Office beyond a haughty answer to the effect that His Majesty's Ministers were bound to abide by their own interpretation of the law.[1] The general sentiment of the Northern Powers was extremely hostile to Great Britain, and very favourable to the French Government which professed, and observed, a much more liberal and considerate policy in dealing with the rights of neutrals. But the smaller States were helpless unless they could find a patron and a champion; and the Comte de Vergennes repeatedly approached Catherine of Russia with earnest appeals to undertake that office. The Empress, (he declared,) would gain much glory, and would give a noble proof of equity and magnanimity, if she made common cause with her weaker neighbours in forcing England to renounce a system which was destructive to European commerce.[2]

The British Cabinet at last began to recognise the danger of the situation, and Sir James Harris was commissioned to inform Count Panin that our naval officers had received special orders to refrain henceforward from detaining and searching Russian merchantmen. That, in the conception of the Bedfords, was a most flattering and seductive counter-bid for the good graces of the

[1] In an important conversation, held in December 1778, Harris expounded the British theory of belligerent rights to Count Panin, the Prime Minister of Russia. "Count Panin," (so Harris reported,) "did not admit my reasoning. He said, smiling, that being accustomed to command at sea, our language on maritime objects was always too positive, and that he wished we had followed the example of France."

[2] See the despatches printed in Doniol's Twelfth Chapter on "Les Commencements de la Ligue des Neutres" in the Third Volume of his History.

Empress Catherine; but they were not so well acquainted as King Frederic, and the Comte de Vergennes, with the character of the sovereign whom their offer was intended to conciliate. Catherine, on one side of her nature, was a grasping and unscrupulous woman of business, who had lent a prodigious impulse to those acquisitive tendencies of the Russian Government which have transformed the map of the world to its own advantage. But there was a romantic vein in her composition; and she sometimes was willing to pose, on a grandiose scale, as a paragon and a model of chivalry and generosity. She was the true grandmother of that Czar Alexander who in 1813, and 1814, stood forth against the Emperor Napoleon as the Liberator of Europe.

The concession of special indulgences and facilities to Russian commerce produced a result diametrically opposite to that which had been contemplated by the British Foreign Office. Catherine refused to purchase immunity for herself by the sacrifice of her less formidable neighbours, and she speedily and openly threw in her lot with theirs. On the eighth of March 1780 she issued a proclamation asserting, on behalf of neutrals, those rights and securities which were recognised by France, and denied by Great Britain; and the lead given by Russia was followed by Sweden and Denmark with suspicious and significant promptitude. The three Governments bound themselves mutually to equip, and keep on foot, a combined fleet in certain fixed proportions, and to exact a strict retaliation for every one of their trading vessels which was seized by the cruisers of any belligerent Power.[1] That threat, though ostensibly of universal application, in point of fact was addressed only to Great Britain; and for the British Government it became a source of vast embarrassment, and terrible

[1] "Orders have been given at Stockholm to fit out three ships of seventy guns, and three of sixty guns, on which they are working night and day. Four of them are lying at Malmoe already." London Newspaper of October 1780.

and ever-increasing peril. The example of the Baltic States was imitated by all the naval countries of Europe. The Netherlands acceded to the Armed Neutrality before the year was over. Prussia gave in her adhesion in May 1781, and the German Empire in the following October. Portugal, that ancient ally of England, moved in the same direction reluctantly, and by successive steps; but she was not strong enough to stand out, and stand alone, and in the summer of 1782 Portugal likewise joined the ranks of our potential enemies.[1] By that time the Ottoman Porte was the only great Power whose disposition towards us still remained undecided; and, as the war went on, even the Turk found it necessary to put himself in the fashion, and take his place among the armed protectors of the Rights of Neutrals. Such was the pass to which our country had been brought by the statesmen who were entrusted with her guidance. "The wisdom of these counsellors," wrote a London journalist, "surpasses the possibility of human estimation. They have created a war with America, another with France, a third with Spain, and now a fourth with Holland. A nation or two, more or less, does not seem to be a matter of the least consideration with them. The candle they have lighted in America may, and probably will, make a dreadful fire in Europe."

Never has there been a more remarkable proof of the maritime aptitudes of our countrymen than was afforded by this long and arduous contest. They held their own at sea against half the naval Powers of the world in arms, while hampered and distressed by the ill-will and ill offices of all the others. But the

[1] In October 1780 access to Portuguese harbours had been forbidden to armed vessels of all nations. This was a matter of unimportance to American privateers-men who had all the ports of Spain, and France, and Holland, to choose from for the replenishment of their stores, and the sale of their prizes; but it was a serious blow to British cruisers which had no house of call, or place of refuge, between Falmouth and Gibraltar.

complete isolation of England, — which made the assertion of her supremacy on the ocean a more difficult, and therefore a more honourable, task, — entirely paralysed her military operations on land. It was not the fault of her soldiers. As far as the quality of her regimental officers, and her rank and file, was in question there seldom had been a better army for its size than the British army in America. Englishmen had been opposed to Englishmen in a succession of desperate encounters until their standard of fighting had been raised to so high a point as to astonish not only their adversaries, but themselves also, on the first serious occasion when they came face to face with a foreign enemy. The same had been the case when, very soon after our civil wars were over, Cromwell's pikemen charged the Spaniards at Dunkirk as they had been accustomed to charge at Marston Moor, and Naseby, and Preston, and Worcester; and the same result would almost undoubtedly have ensued, at the close of the war of the Secession in America, if the Emperor Louis Napoleon had not prudently shipped his army back to France before the veterans of Antietam, and Gettysburg, and Spottsylvania came in their scores of thousands to see what the French were doing in Mexico.

The occasion in question took place on the eighteenth of December 1778, when a powerful French force, which had been landed on the island of Saint Lucie from d'Estaing's fleet, was routed by fifteen companies of British infantry with a slaughter so awful as to excite the compassion of the victors. The affair lasted three hours. A hundred and eighty English were killed and wounded, and four hundred Frenchmen were buried on the field. Our officers declared with pride that their own people had shot as coolly and accurately as they themselves had been shot at from the redoubt on Bunker's Hill; although at Saint Lucie the English, for the most part, did not fire from behind defences. The grenadier battalion was commanded by the young

fellow who had distinguished himself in so many of Sir William Howe's battles, — Major Harris of the Fifth Foot. "It was in this action that the Fifth," (so the regimental record runs,) "acquired the privilege of wearing a white plume in the cap, having taken from the bodies of the slain French grenadiers, the advance and élite of the enemy's force, as many white feathers as sufficed to equip every man in the regiment with the new decoration." Saint Lucie has not yet been forgotten in that famous corps, or in the Northern county with which it has always been connected. In August 1898, when the battalion made a parade march through Northumberland, "the plume fell unnoticed from the bearskin of one of the captains. It was brought to him by an agricultural labourer, who remarked as he handed it in, 'Mustn't lose this, Sir; or you'll have to go back to Saint Lucie for another.'"

A like spirit was exhibited throughout the war whenever, and wherever, our troops came into collision with a European antagonist. Britons still remember, — they still can see in their National Gallery, admirably depicted by the hand of an American colonist, — the repulse of the French attack upon Jersey in January 1781, and the heroic death of that British officer whose energy saved the island. Nor did British artillerymen ever perform a more splendid service than when they destroyed the floating batteries at Gibraltar, and inflicted upon the combined fleets and armies of France and Spain a catastrophe which wrecked the hopes, and ruined the credit, of their commanders.[1] But Gibraltar, and Jersey, and Saint Lucie were nothing more than episodes in a gigantic struggle for existence, during which Britain was standing on her defence, not with

[1] "Glory in war is not always the prize of success. It is often the consolation for defeat, when defeat is due to misfortune, and not to fault. * * * But at Gibraltar, in place of glory, our generals and admirals reaped nothing but shame." Those words were written by the Duc des Cars, who was in attendance upon the Comte d'Artois when that prince travelled all the way from Versailles to see Gibraltar taken.

invariable success, in every quarter of the globe; and the character of the war was such that no aggressive operations on European soil were so much as attempted by the British Government. Over the whole continent of Europe England had not a single friendly port at which to disembark a military expedition, or a friendly tract of country to serve her as the base for a campaign. Our militia were barely sufficient for the protection of our home shores; and our only expeditionary force was the fine and numerous army which was fighting, or idling, on the American side of the Atlantic Ocean, and which, for the purposes of European warfare, might as well have been quartered in another planet. It was a very different story from the days when the armies of Queen Anne, and George the Second, marched and conquered on the mainland of Europe, in concert with large and well-disciplined contingents of allies, led by famous captains, and inspired by a hearty enthusiasm for a common cause. "One cannot," wrote Horace Walpole in 1780, "be always in the year 1759, and have victories fresh and fresh for every post-day. We now have camps at home instead of conquests abroad. I remember an old ironic song of Dick Estcourt's:

'How with bloody French rags he has littered poor Westminster Hall,
O slovenly John, Duke of Marlborough!'"

No one, (said Walpole,) would have occasion to make that complaint against any of the present generals.

There remains on record a striking instance of the feelings which prevailed among the best of our countrymen, irrespective of party politics, during that anxious and absorbing crisis of our history. William Cowper, after many years of melancholy silence and seclusion, had recently taken his place once more among his fellow-men, and, at the mature age of seven-and-forty, had entered upon a fruitful career of literary activity. As far as his nature was capable of partisanship he was a supporter of Lord North's Government. He began by

dashing off a spirited satire upon the politicians of the Opposition, which came nearer to being a lampoon than any other production of his kindly and graceful pen. He took occasion to commemorate the valour and resolution displayed by Englishmen, under circumstances of unexampled difficulty and peril, in a noble apostrophe to England.

> "A world is up in arms, and thou, a spot
> Not quickly found, if negligently sought, —
> Thy soul as ample as thy bounds are small, —
> Endure'st the brunt, and dare'st defy them all."

But Cowper, all the more because he loved and admired his country, was cruelly disappointed as he compared her present with her past. In 1770, — when his mind clouded over, and passing events became to him as though they were not, — he had left Britain in an undisputed, and apparently assured, position as the first nation in the world; and now, in the summer of 1778, he emerged from his protracted retirement to find her the object of universal, implacable, and too often triumphant, hostility. The glorious roll of our victories in the Seven Years' War had been for William Cowper an unfailing source of personal pride and satisfaction. "When poor Bob White," (he wrote in January 1781,) "brought me the news of Boscawen's success off the coast of Portugal, how did I leap for joy! When Hawke demolished Conflans I was still more transported. But nothing could express my rapture when Wolfe made the conquest of Quebec. I am therefore, I suppose, not destitute of true patriotism; but the course of public events has of late afforded me no opportunity to exert it. I cannot rejoice, for I see no reason; and I will not murmur." In obedience to that religious belief which coloured his thoughts, and guided his conduct, Cowper was firmly persuaded that the best hope for national recovery lay in an amendment of national morals, and in a devout and humble submission to the will, and the behests, of a Divine Providence.

"It takes," he said, "a great many blows to knock down a great nation; and, in the case of poor England, a great many heavy ones have not been wanting. They make us stagger indeed; but the blow is not yet struck that would make us fall *upon our knees*. That fall would save us."

CHAPTER XIV

THE DUKE OF RICHMOND. THE BEDFORDS AND THE OPPOSITION.

THERE was one man, of all others, who would have made a trusty and efficient War Minister in that day of England's need. The public career of Charles Lennox, third Duke of Richmond and Lennox, presents a striking instance of the manner in which the great men of old interpreted the obligations of nobility. At one-and-twenty he already commanded a regiment of infantry, that same Thirty-third Foot which afterwards had a still more famous colonel in the Honourable Arthur Wellesley; and Richmond was remarked for his fiery valour on more than one notable occasion during Chatham's war. In 1765, at the age of thirty, he was sent to Versailles as Ambassador Extraordinary, and Minister Plenipotentiary, to meet a crisis when the relations between France and England were strained almost to the point of breaking. "Young, inexperienced, and high souled as he was," we are told that he conducted himself with rare prudence and temper.[1] He patiently endured the delays, and resolutely foiled the trickeries, of de Choiseul's able, and far from scrupulous, diplomacy; and in the end he secured a peaceful settlement of all outstanding differences without impairing, or imperilling, the honour of the British Crown. His loyalty to his own country did him no disservice in Parisian society, where he won universal admiration by his gallant bearing, and by the grace and beauty which, like others of her descendants, he had derived from Louise de Querouaille, the high-born mistress of our King Charles the Second;—a lady whose sins may be par-

[1] *Walpole's Memoirs of the Reign of George the Third;* Volume II, chapter 10.

doned by Englishmen when they remember her as the ancestress of Charles Fox, and Lady Sarah Lennox, and Charles, and George, and William Napier.

The solid qualities, and businesslike habits, which Richmond brought back from his successful mission in France, stood him in good stead when he aspired to take a foremost part in the deliberations of Parliament, where he spoke and acted under a sense of responsibility which would have befitted a Minister of the Crown, and with the freedom and boldness of an independent senator. Vigilant in detecting and exposing abuses, diligent in promoting reforms, and pertinacious in cross-examining every department of Government with searching enquiries which he insisted upon getting duly answered, he kept the House of Lords almost as much alive as his nephew Charles kept the House of Commons. Richmond's oratory was characterised by a sort of royal haughtiness, and soldier-like audacity, which impressed and captivated those among his hearers who were not the immediate objects of his unsparing, and somewhat too contemptuous, censure. He was terribly feared by the corrupt, and sincerely respected by the honest, men of every party; and as for those friends and associates who were united with him in pursuit of the same policy, there was no limit to the affection and esteem with which they regarded him. Their feeling was well expressed in a letter from Edmund Burke to a celebrated physician who was in attendance on the Duke of Richmond when he had gone down to Goodwood for a holiday. "He has done," said Burke, "all for his country which could be done by any man; and what he has not done is not lost to himself in internal satisfaction, nor to the world in the example he has shown of resolution, disinterestedness, and public spirit. I wish his repose may recruit, not rust, his great abilities." [1]

In February 1778, — when the outbreak of war with

[1] Edmund Burke to Doctor Brocklesby; Beaconsfield, July 21, 1777.

France was a matter of a few weeks, and possibly of a few days, — Richmond called notice in the House of Lords to the defenceless condition of our island. The Duke knew what he was talking about, and he did not shrink from disclosing the important conclusion to which his own mind had been irresistibly driven. He had learned, at Minden and elsewhere, that battles are decided by the steadiness of a trained and veteran infantry; and he now implored Parliament to declare that, until the nation had been made secure at home, no more of the old line regiments should be shipped across the Atlantic, so that the scanty residue of the British army, which was not already in America, might be reserved intact for the protection of the British shores.

The startling facts and figures upon which the proposal was based made a strong impression upon the public judgment; and the Duke's advice acquired all the greater weight from his patriotic activities and sacrifices outside the walls of Parliament. In the course of the next month orders were issued from headquarters to call out the militia. Seventeen years previously, during the late French war, the balloting for compulsory service in the North of England had provoked desperate riots which it had cost much bloodshed to repress:[1] and in the spring of 1778 the same spirit was abroad even in counties the most exposed to a French invasion. In Sussex, especially, there was a flare of anger among the class of people who were liable to be drawn for militiamen. The town of Petworth was occupied by a mob armed with cudgels, who snatched the list of names from the pockets of a

[1] In March 1761 five thousand pitmen, waggoners, and farm-servants of Northumberland and Durham assembled at Hexham to stop the balloting for the militia. They crowded in upon the troops who were drawn up in front of the Town-hall, and a conflict ensued in which an officer, and several soldiers, were shot down, while more than a score of their assailants were left dead, or dying, on the pavement of the market-place. *Sykes's Local Records; Newcastle, 1833. Essay towards a History of Hexham; Alnwick, 1823.*

Deputy Lieutenant, and tore it to pieces in the street. One unpopular official was fain to escape from his back window down a ladder, and for some nights afterwards the less courageous of the neighbouring squires did not venture to sleep in their own houses. The effervescence was at its height when the Duke of Richmond appeared on the scene with his immense popularity, and his sturdy belief in the fairness and good sense of his humbler fellow-countrymen. "At Brighthelmstone," (according to the local correspondent of a Government journal,) "his Grace went down into the crowd, with a small switch in his hand, attended by a few country gentlemen. He reasoned with the people, and explained the law, and then crossed the country to Lewes." His presence everywhere quelled the tumult; and his arguments were the more persuasive because he enforced them by his personal example. He looked out his old campaigning kit, and thenceforward lived under canvas in the midst of his own battalion, which he soon fashioned into a model of discipline and efficiency. Nor did he tire of soldiering when the novelty had worn off, or withdraw himself from his post as soon as the first alarm of invasion was over. Thirty months subsequently the London newspapers reported that the Duke of Richmond had been with his regiment at Dorking through the whole of the summer of 1780, "fulfilling all the duties with an alacrity, and an exertion of professional knowledge, as if his future fortune was to be obtained in this line."

Richmond was a manful and indefatigable enemy to France whenever France was the enemy of England. But it so happened that he ranked among the French nobility as the Duc d'Aubigny, — a title which had come to him through his great-grandmother, who died a few months before he was born, having survived her royal lover for exactly half a century. This circumstance suggested the line of detraction and insinuation which was eagerly and clamorously pursued by the pensioned scribes of the Ministry, who sometimes

attacked Richmond as a Frenchman at heart, and a traitor to his own country, and sometimes as a second Duke of Monmouth, bent upon throwing politics into confusion in order to improve his chance of establishing a fictitious claim to the throne of England. Week after week, and morning after morning, "the Anglo-Gallic Duke" was accused of supplying the French War Office with treacherous information, and of framing his parliamentary action at Westminster to suit the policy of "his bosom friends," the Ministers at Versailles. He was reminded that, although he was nothing better than "the illegitimate spawn of the most vicious and profligate of the Stuarts," he had refused to display the bar sinister on his coat of arms, because he was secretly determined, when the time was ripe, to follow the example of the son of Lucy Walters, and assert his pretensions to the Crown. The author of this venomous balderdash was the Reverend Henry Bate, the editor of the Morning Post, — a clergyman of the Church of England, who was a bully always and everywhere, and a duellist, or a pugilist, according to the social rank of his antagonist, and the nature and scene of the quarrel in which he chanced to be engaged. He was a personage to whom Doctor Johnson, the most respected member of his own party, declined, in a very characteristic sentence, to allow any merit whatsoever except the intrepidity of a highwayman as contrasted to the cunning of a footpad. But Bate stood secure in the good graces of the Court, which, during many years in succession, continued to load him with marks of favour and gratitude. He was made a justice of the peace in several counties, the pluralist rector of several parishes, the Chancellor of a diocese, the Prebend of a cathedral, and a Baronet of the United Kingdom, in days when Baronetcies were not so freely given as in our own lavish generation.

At length these vague charges of complicity with the foreign enemy took shape and substance in a string of queries which the Duke of Richmond was challenged to

answer. "Did you not," he was asked, "furnish the Court of France with plans of the weakest and most defenceless parts of this island? Was it not by the advice and the instigation of your Grace that the united fleets of France and Spain paraded off Plymouth with the object, by such a feint, to facilitate your Grace's favourite scheme of a descent upon the coast of Sussex?" The accused statesman now thought himself obliged in honour to take notice of the calumny; and Dunning accordingly applied to the Court of King's Bench for a criminal information against the editor of the Morning Post, on the ground that the Duke could not bring a civil action because his Grace had not suffered pecuniary injury "even to the damage of a farthing." If this miscreant, (so Dunning argued,) knew the Duke to be a traitor, he was bound by his allegiance to have disclosed the matter to the Secretary of State and the Attorney General; but that was an impossible supposition, inasmuch as every act of the Duke's life contradicted the charge. The virulence of the Ministerial press was at once turned against Dunning; but the great advocate refused to be intimidated. Bate was put upon his trial in the summer of 1780, and by that time the temper of the middle classes was such that no jury would have consented to find a verdict unfavourable to the most popular nobleman in England, who was likewise a gallant soldier, in order to gratify the feelings of Lord George Germaine, and the Earl of Sandwich. The case was tried by Lord Mansfield himself; and the defendant was found guilty of criminal libel, and committed to prison for a term of twelve months.

King George, if he was so minded, might have found it easy to select an alternative Government from the ranks of the Opposition. Lord Chatham, in his lifetime, had commanded the allegiance of many faithful adherents, some of whom, and those the most distinguished, still survived to exemplify in their public

conduct the Chatham traditions of statesmanship and patriotism. Charles Fox was surrounded by a band of young peers and commoners, of high promise, who were admirably qualified to fill the subordinate places in a Ministry, and whom Fox was prepared to keep in much tighter discipline than that to which he himself had been subjected in the days when he was a Junior Lord of the Treasury or the Admiralty. And Edmund Burke, throughout his parliamentary career, had habitually acted in close concert and sympathy with a large circle of friends and allies who maintained the same high standard as himself in all that related to the morality of politics.

It is difficult to attribute the course pursued by the Opposition leaders between the years 1774 and 1780 to a lower motive than disinterested patriotism. Rarely indeed has an Opposition front bench held so many occupants who were free from any desire whatever to cross the floor, and usurp the seats of those Ministers whom they were criticising and denouncing. Sir George Savile never took office in any Government, although every Government would have bid high to secure his services. Lord John Cavendish would have regarded the salary of the Chancellor of the Exchequer as a very poor compensation for his season's fox-hunting; Lord Rockingham had always been most unwilling to exchange the fresh air, and ample spaces, of his North-country mansion for the close quarters, and gloomy outlooks, of an official residence in Whitehall; and Lord Camden was so much in love with the ease and leisure which suited his advancing years that, when his party returned to power, he refused the Great Seal, and was content to accept a post of less business, and far smaller emolument. Charles Fox, — coming straight from behind the scenes at Downing Street, and fresh from his intimacy with the Bedfords, among whom a very different theory of public life prevailed, — was astonished, and not over well pleased, by the indifference to place and salary which was observable among his new associates. In

his heart of hearts he gravely doubted whether a vigorous offensive could be expected from an army whose commanders had no hankering after the spoils of victory. "My dear Burke," (he wrote from Chatsworth,) "I have been living here some time with very pleasant and amiable people, but altogether as unfit to storm a citadel as they would be proper for the defence of it."[1] The main object of the Rockinghams was not so much to get themselves in, as to turn Lord North and his fellows out; and their endeavours to effect that object became elevated into a paramount public duty as soon as France and Spain violated the peace, and united in a deliberate and deadly scheme for the ruin of England. It was idle to anticipate that a war, which imperilled the existence of the British empire and the safety and integrity of the British Islands, could be conducted to a prosperous issue by the same Secretaries of State, and Lords of the Admiralty, who had failed to re-conquer America. Every one, outside the circle of courtiers, deemed it a flagrant scandal that Lord George Germaine, who had planned the campaign which terminated at Saratoga, should continue to direct the strategy of our Transatlantic armies; and that Lord Sandwich was still entrusted with the naval interests of Great Britain after he had permitted a hostile fleet, during four live-long weeks, to cruise unopposed up and down the British Channel.

It was impossible, (so Lord Camden told the Peers,) to pursue the duel with America, and at the same time give battle to her two seconds, France and Spain, who came fresh on to the ground at an advanced point of the encounter. "Attack France!" he cried, in language worthy of Chatham's trusted colleague, and devoted friend. "Attack France immediately! Attack her powerfully by sea! England is still mistress of the ocean. To wound America is to wound ourselves. To aim a blow at France is to prevent a blow being aimed

[1] The Hon. Charles Fox to Edmund Burke, Esq.; Chatsworth, September 8, 1777.

at us by an inveterate enemy." Exhortations to a vigorous prosecution of the French war were no insincere and meaningless phrases when used by the gentry and nobility of the Opposition. For they practised as they taught. They paid with their persons. They spent their summers and autumns under canvas on Kentish downs, and Essex commons. They visited the outposts by night, and passed the day in drilling those neighbours and dependants whom their example and influence had attracted into the ranks of the militia by scores and hundreds. They sat on Courts Martial, and filled in Regimental Returns, and kept a sharp eye on the Government contractors, who soon discovered that it was no trivial or venial misdemeanour to provide bad bread and sour beer for a battalion commanded by an Earl of Derby, or a Duke of Devonshire. Some eminent statesmen, who did not share the responsibilities of power, were at much trouble and expense to remedy the negligence, and correct the want of foresight, which prevailed in the public departments as they then were administered. Lord Shelburne was a master of finance, and a rigid auditor of the accounts of national income and expenditure which were laid before Parliament by the Treasury. The Duke of Grafton had kept up his old relations with certain trustworthy correspondents on the continent of Europe; and, facing the prospect of a rebuff, he warned the Secretary of State of the preparations afoot in the French arsenals for assisting the American insurgents with arms and ammunition. But his facts were disputed with an incredulity bordering upon impertinence; and his well-intentioned and well-founded advice met with an even cooler reception than is usually accorded to the suggestions of an ex-Minister by former colleagues who are still in office.

It was to the credit of the Opposition leaders that their energies were not exclusively absorbed by the conduct of the war, and the agitations of party conflict. The allies and followers of Lord Rockingham were ahead of their age in their attention to that remedial legislation

which, two generations afterwards, came to be regarded as the main function of Parliament. They found time to correct the blots and omissions in the great Toleration Act, and succeeded in enabling Nonconformists of every denomination to preach, and teach school, without being under an obligation to subscribe the Articles. They bestirred themselves to mitigate the extravagant cruelties of our penal code, and protested often and earnestly against the indiscriminate use of the gallows "as the specific and infallible means of cure and prevention." It was in the course of this same Parliament that Burke exerted himself on behalf of the multitude of humble debtors who filled our jails, and advocated a more merciful and rational system in speeches weighty with argument, and glowing with the eloquence of pity and humanity.

Edmund Burke's disinterested care for the public welfare was in sharp contrast to the habit of mind which prevailed among the King's Ministers. Secure in office, and all but absolute in power, over a very considerable space in the history of the British nation, they had enjoyed, and neglected, an unique opportunity for enriching the Statute Book with salutary and beneficent laws. They had passed more than enough Coercion Acts, and many Budgets; but they had grappled with no social problems, and they had done nothing to remove, although much to create and embitter, grievances. Thurlow was now Lord Chancellor; and, during all the years that he occupied his exalted office, it stands on the authority of one of his successors that "he never issued an order to correct any of the abuses of his own court, and he never brought forward in parliament any measure to improve the administration of justice."[1] Dundas, so long as he was a member of Lord North's Government, derided all proposals for constructive legislation, or administrative reform, as so many plausible and hypocritical concessions to the cant of progress, and the cant of probity. And

[1] *Campbell's Lives of the Lord Chancellors;* Chapter CLVII.

as for the Bedfords, — that knot of strong men who knew their own minds, and who terrorised and dominated the Cabinet, — they would have scouted the very notion that they owed any duty except to themselves, and to each other. They held that the first and last object of a sensible public man was to get hold of public money; and they preached on that theme with engaging frankness, and with as near an approach as they ever made to religious unction. "Rigby," wrote George Selwyn to Lord Carlisle, "came to me in the House last night to know if I had heard from you, adding, 'I hope to God he will accept the Bedchamber.'" A contemporary of the Bedfords, who had watched their career with admiring interest, praised them for never having resigned, or refused, office on a question of conscience, or a point of honour. "I do not hear," he said, "of one of them being guilty of these childish indiscretions of quarrelling with two or three thousand a year." Jovial egotists, whose scanty stock of altruism was all expended on their brother Bedfords, they were the most unlikely men in the world to trouble themselves about the preparation of legislative projects for the benefit of mankind in general. It was never their custom to waste candle-light over such dry and unprofitable researches when pleasanter game was afoot.

Half a generation back, when the Bedfords were still on their promotion, it was said of them that they cared little what might happen to the country so long as they had three thousand pounds a year apiece, and three thousand bottles of champagne and claret. Whatever might be the case with the wine, — and they still drank as hard as ever, — it is certain that three thousand pounds a year fell far short of the sum at which the Bedfords rated their services to the nation after they attained the zenith of their power. Rigby had long ago established a most remunerative connection with Ireland, where he had been Master of the Rolls, Commissioner of the Board of Trade, and Vice-Treasurer, with a salary, for that office alone, of three thousand five hundred pounds. But the toll which he had levied on the Dublin Treasury

was relatively a very small part of his annual emoluments. Ever since 1768 he had been Paymaster of the British Forces, drawing the current interest on the enormous mass of national cash which passed very slowly through his hands, and too often stuck between his fingers. Rigby, who never was bashful or reticent, surpassed himself in bluster whenever attention was called to the nature, and the amount, of his very questionable gains. Towards the end of his ministerial career he found himself obliged to face a combined attack from William Pitt and Charles Fox, whose united ages fell short by half-a-dozen years of the time of life which he himself had reached. Pitt, the younger and more austere of the two, protested with something of disgust that the nation was weary of paying cash to a person who profited more by the war than any four members then present. "I am tired," Rigby replied, "of the American war; but I am by no means tired of receiving cash. And I will just venture to remark that, however lucrative my office may be, it has been held by the fathers of the two Honourable Gentlemen who spoke last; and I make little doubt that, whenever I am compelled to quit it, those gentlemen themselves may have an eye to getting it." Such was the line of defence which Rigby thought it becoming to adopt, although he perfectly well knew that, (whatever might have been the case with Lord Holland,) William Pitt's famous sire, poor as he then was, had sternly and contemptuously refused to accept a single shilling over and above his legal and regular salary as Paymaster of the Forces.

Throughout the American war, and the seven years that preceded it, Rigby was a power of the first order in Parliament. With the skill of a born actor he made himself up for the part of an independent English gentleman of the old school, — a conspicuous and most characteristic figure in his close-buttoned suit of purple cloth, unrelieved by lace or embroidery, with his sword thrust carelessly through his pocket. He showed a bluff and resolute visage, with a complexion, ripened by the pick

of fifty vintages, which matched the colour of his costume, and had earned him an ironical compliment from the pen of Junius.[1] He seldom spoke from the Treasury Bench, but stood, square and sturdy, on the Opposition side of the House, patronising the Ministers when they merited his approbation, or taking them roundly to task if they displayed symptoms of what he regarded as weakness or timidity. Rigby's success as a debater is explained, and analysed, in one of the few good passages which occur in a book of very dubious merit. "He seemed," wrote Sir Nathaniel Wraxall, "neither to fear, nor even to respect, the House, whose composition, as a body, he well knew; and to the members of which assembly he never appeared to give credit for any portion of virtue, patriotism, or public spirit." Rigby was always ready to assert, in rough and plain language which everybody could follow, that the Middlesex electors had no claim to be represented by the man of their choice, unless that choice was acceptable to the House of Commons; that Parliament, when called on to defray the King's debts, should abstain from putting impertinent questions, and should content itself with voting all the money for which His Majesty condescended to ask; that the militiamen of Massachusetts and Connecticut were a parcel of cowards, who would run away at the first tap of a royal drum; and that the English squires need never expect to get quit of the Land-tax until American merchants were forced or frightened into paying the Tea-duty. The whole tribe of politicians, who went by the name of the King's Friends, hung upon his words; for they conjectured truly that he was interpreting for their guidance the secret policy, and innermost wishes, of their Sovereign. They cheered his easy, roistering speeches; they voted as he bade them; and, when the House rose, the more favoured among them marched forth at his invitation to finish up the night with a carousal at the Pay Office.

[1] Junius remarked that Mr. Rigby afforded the only instance in which "blushing merit" had been assisted and protected by the Duke of Bedford.

Retribution dogged his footsteps, but was slow to overtake the culprit. A newspaper, which supported the Government, admitted that Mr. Rigby made twenty thousand a year during the whole time the war lasted, but that "he did not hoard greatly." That compliment was undoubtedly his due. There is no income so large as to preserve from embarrassment a man who at the outset of life has been overtaken by debt, and who has not contrived, or greatly cared, to escape from it; and Rigby had never known what it was to be solvent.[1] With his arms up to the elbows in a heap of Treasury gold he was to outward appearance a very rich man when, in March 1782, Lord North resigned, and Edmund Burke became Paymaster of the Forces. Burke declined to employ the Army Balances for his own individual profit, and called upon his predecessor to refund several hundred thousand pounds of public money which were not forthcoming. Rigby's parliamentary action thenceforward degenerated into a series of humiliating shifts, and tortuous and desperate intrigues, directed towards the one and only object of staving off enquiry into his Pay Office accounts. But he no longer exercised his wonted spell over the rank and file of his party in the House of Commons. The virtue, (if such a word may be used in such a connection,) had departed from him; and he died at Bath, a shunned and broken man, just as the early rumblings of the French Revolution were making themselves heard in the air. The Chancellor of the Exchequer wrote off his outstanding liabilities as a bad debt; and the world, — having then, and for long after, a great deal else to think about, — thrust aside the memory of him like an unpleasant tale that had been too often told.

A Government, whose mainstay in Parliament was the Right Honourable Richard Rigby, and whose tactics

[1] Until he was fifty years old Rigby was frequently and largely helped by the Duke of Bedford, who lent him great sums of money, and who left him by will five thousand pounds, and the less valuable legacy of all his own notes of hand.

were settled for it by an inner Cabinet of Bedfords, sitting over their burgundy in Lord Sandwich's parlour at the Admiralty, was not likely to observe the laws of fair play in dealing with the reputation of a political adversary. Whatever slackness might prevail in the management of the Army, the Navy, and the Foreign Office, there was one department with which no fault whatsoever could be found on the score of energy; for the manipulation of the daily press was organised on system, and worked with thoroughness, during the whole term that Lord North's administration lasted. A troop of news-writers, who took their pay and their instructions from Downing Street, carried on the warfare of politics with a breadth and sameness of vituperation which in the end surfeited and revolted the patience of the public. No imputation was too monstrously improbable to be employed against a member of the Opposition. Every prominent statesman, who condemned the bribery and corruption by which Parliament had been reduced to servile dependence on the Crown, was charged with a deliberate intention to subvert the Throne in the interests of his own ambition; and the nickname of "the Republicans" was flung freely at such aristocrats as Lord Rockingham, and Lord Shelburne, —and even at Edmund Burke, in whose eyes every jot and tittle of the British Constitution was as the Letter of the Law to a Pharisee. Orders had gone forth from head-quarters that no measure should be observed in vilifying and belittling that great man; and Ministerial journalists, at such times as they had not another accusation ready to their hands, were always prepared to fall back upon their staple calumny, and inform the world, sometimes by innuendo, and sometimes by direct assertion, that there was insanity in Mr. Burke's blood, and that he had at last talked himself mad.

CHAPTER XV

THE WAR IN THE SOUTH. THE CAROLINIAN LEADERS.

During the second half of the period covered by the American rebellion the actual fighting was almost exclusively confined to those districts which lay south of the Potomac River. That phase of the long conflict between the mother-country and her colonies has been singularly attractive to English-writing military historians on both continents for a reason intimately connected with their sentiment of patriotism. It was a struggle between men of the same race, actuated by an irreconcileable, but perfectly honourable, difference of opinion; maintained with rare valour, and unflinching endurance under the extreme of toil, privation, and suffering; and marked at frequent intervals by battles offered and accepted with eagerness, and contested with desperate obstinacy. The raw levies of citizens, whether Loyalists or Republicans, who were called hastily into the field from the farmsteads and plantations of Virginia and the Carolinas, — although they often behaved creditably, and sometimes heroically, — on more than one occasion showed themselves unequal to the demands made upon their courage and constancy; but the British regulars, and the American veterans of the Continental Line, never acknowledged themselves beaten until an altogether unusual proportion of their number had been killed and wounded. No defeat was inglorious; and the ranks of the successful party were in most cases so terribly thinned that their general gained as little profit from his victory as if it had been a drawn battle. So great a list of casualties, when compared with the strength of the forces engaged, was never again recorded in all the successive actions of an entire series of campaigns until the War of Secession of

1861 to 1865 once more brought into collision armies which were mainly, and on one side almost entirely, composed of Anglo-Saxon soldiers.

The grim and tragic story was dignified and elevated by the personality of the two principal actors; for each of the contending armies was led by a general of antique honour, who might have stepped straight out of the earlier pages of Plutarch. That well-matched pair of antagonists represented the highest type of national quality in the communities to which they severally belonged. Old England, with all her long roll of illustrious names, has never been more faithfully and unselfishly, — and seldom, (taking his career as a whole,) more efficiently, — served than by Lord Cornwallis; and Nathanael Greene, in his bent of thought, his turn of phrase, his habits of life, and his methods of public action, reflected what was best and most characteristic in New England. The war in the Southern States, from first to last, was replete with human interest. The small number of men who took part in each engagement, their ardent belief in their own cause, and even, (under certain aspects,) their fierce mutual animosity, are circumstances which lend a peculiar fascination to the narrative. A reader, fatigued and bewildered by the strain on the imagination, and the effort of memory, required to follow the details of the huge and complicated butcheries of European warfare in the nineteenth century, may turn with a sense of relief to the intelligible manœuvres, and the picturesque incidents, of the American victory at King's Mountain, and the British victories at Camden and Guildford Court House. More than six thousand men, all told, never met in fight on the soil of the Carolinas between the years 1778 and 1782; but posterity will always estimate the importance of a battle not so much by the multitude of the combatants as by the value in the scale of humanity of their individual lives, and the nature of the motives which inspired them to lay down those lives for their country. The world, which has forgotten so much else,

is never tired of hearing about the hundred and ninety-two Athenians who fell at Marathon ; and the Spartans who died at Thermopylæ did not, and indeed could not, exceed three hundred.

Those are some of the causes which have tempted historians to dwell minutely upon the battles in the Carolinas during the later years of the American Revolution ; but, as a matter of fact, the event was governed and decided by considerations of deeper import than any one, or a dozen, encounters between the small armies, seldom exceeding the numbers of a strong brigade, which ranged to and fro over that interminable tract of country. The analogy of the Boer war at the end of the last century, and the commencement of the present, throws a revealing light upon the character and complexion of that phase of the contest in the Southern States of America which began with the capture of Charleston, and issued in the loss of Yorktown. The Republics of the Transvaal, and of the Orange River, covered between them an extent of about a hundred and fifty thousand square miles, and maintained a population of Dutch descent estimated at between two hundred, and two hundred and fifty, thousand souls ; although it probably was nearer the former than the latter figure. That sparse and hardy community did not finally succumb in its contest with a powerful empire until the entire country had been thickly studded with fortified camps, and strong military posts ; until large districts had been enclosed in lines of almost contiguous blockhouses connected with one another by a network of barbed wire ; until the British Treasury had expended two hundred millions of money ; and until more than two hundred thousand British regulars and irregulars, at one and the same moment, were campaigning in the front, or guarding the communications of the army.

Such has been the experience of our own generation ; and our ancestors, a hundred and twenty years previously, were faced with exactly the same difficulties. Virginia, North and South Carolina, and Georgia

formed a continuous territory extending over a hundred and ninety thousand square miles, and containing rather less than three hundred thousand whites, and perhaps half as many negroes. The problems presented by South Africa in 1900, and by the Southern States of America in 1780, were therefore very similar in their nature and their magnitude; but the means at the disposal of the English Ministry were widely different in the two cases. The Royal army between the Potomac and the Savannah rivers, and between the range of the Alleghanies and the Atlantic coast, seldom exceeded ten thousand men during the most critical period of the Southern war. Ten thousand British soldiers, where fifty thousand would hardly have sufficed, were the most that could be spared for the task of over-running that vast area, and conquering and holding in subjection that community of practised marksmen and irrepressible political partisans.

South Carolina was a State upon whose unflinching and enthusiastic support the friends of national independence had all along believed that they had every right to reckon. In the earlier stages of the great controversy the people of that State had set, rather than followed, an example of resistance to the fiscal demands of the British Parliament. When one of the fate-laden tea-ships of the East India Company arrived at Charleston in December 1773 her cargo was forthwith brought on shore, and deliberately spoiled for human consumption, to the amount of almost as many chests as, a fortnight later on in the same month, were emptied over the edge of Griffin's Wharf into Boston harbour. When the news of the fighting at Lexington reached South Carolina the Provincial Congress was convened, — or, more properly speaking, convened itself, — and held its first sitting on a Sunday. The executive power was delegated to a large General Committee, to a Secret Committee of five influential and trusty politicians, and to a Council of Safety "with supreme power over the army, the militia, and all military affairs." That was

the first revolutionary Government created in any of the thirteen colonies; and it went to work in a frank and fearless revolutionary spirit. A credit of a hundred and forty thousand pounds sterling was voted for warlike objects; the militia was organised into twelve battalions; three regiments of regular infantry were enlisted, paid, clothed, and armed at the expense of the community; and a very welcome ship-load of gunpowder was despatched to General Washington's camp before Boston as a free gift from the city of Charleston. While these measures were in active progress Lord William Campbell, the new Royal Governor, arrived from England, or rather, (which in the temper of those times was even less of a recommendation,) from Scotland. He was received with black looks, and studied neglect; and sullen aversion rapidly developed into undisguised hostility. Before many weeks had elapsed the King's representative was fain to take sanctuary on board a Royal ship of war lying off the town in an anchorage which had long been known by the prophetic name of Rebellion Road, and the revolutionary government impounded and confiscated his carriage and horses as articles for which he could have no possible use on ship-board.

Those were some of the services which South Carolina had rendered to the American cause; and those were the hostages which she had given to the Revolution. Nothing therefore could exceed the surprise, the disappointment, and the alarm which prevailed throughout the Confederacy when, in the last week of May 1780, it got abroad that General Lincoln and all his Continental troops were prisoners of war, that Charleston had opened its gates to Sir Henry Clinton, and that the entire State of which Charleston was the capital lay prostrate at the feet of the conqueror. Organised resistance had ceased within the Carolinian borders. Small detachments from the victorious army traversed the country, accepting the submission of the inhabitants, and the surrender of their strongholds; and South

Carolina was, to outward appearance, in course of being passively and automatically re-united to the British Crown. "All America is coming in" was the watch-word among Lord North's parliamentary adherents in London. Their exultation was unbounded, and far from unjustified. If there had been statesmanship, as well as soldiership, at the British head-quarters in Carolina, the blow inflicted on the fortunes of the Revolution would have been of incalculable gravity; but Sir Henry Clinton lacked the political wisdom required in order to make the most of the commanding position in which his military skill and energy had placed him.

In May and June 1780 there arose a rare chance for reconstructing British authority on the only basis which a people sprung from British ancestors would tolerate. Overt rebellion had been crushed, and even disaffection for a while was silent, through the whole region which lay between the Cape Fear and the Savannah rivers. The loyalists of South Carolina, though they may not have constituted an actual majority, were very numerous, and in high heart and courage. Their strength had recently been increased by the accession of a most valuable and respectable class of citizens. The English Church establishment in the Southern States of America, — an institution which was second only to the fiscal question among the underlying and operative causes of the rebellion, — had gone down like a house of cards before the earliest breath of the Revolution; but that Church was regretted in South Carolina more than in North Carolina or in Georgia, and very much more than in Virginia.[1] Many of the leading members of the Provincial Congress who met at Charleston in June 1775, and who at that time conscientiously believed themselves to be Whigs, were faithful and attached members of the Episcopalian Church; and an Episcopalian, whether he was aware of it or not, was in most cases a potential

[1] The influence of the ecclesiastical question on the outbreak, and the progress, of the rebellion is set forth in the twenty-seventh chapter of the author's *History of the American Revolution.*

Tory. These gentlemen, and hundreds like them, very soon began to repent the part which they had taken in setting up an independent revolutionary government; and, in May 1780, when the rebel power was broken, and when King George seemed to be on the eve of coming once again to his own, they promptly and joyfully showed themselves in their new, and true, colours. Sir Henry Clinton had ready to his hands an abundance of excellent material for providing South Carolina with a strong and well-ordered civil administration, perfect in all its departments, and protected, but not overshadowed or dominated, by the presence of a British army. A self-governing province attached to the Crown by ties of spontaneous allegiance, where peace and security reigned, and political freedom was respected, would have been an object of envy and imitation to all those men, in every State of the Union, who sighed for a return to the quiet days, and the golden prosperity, which had existed before the war; and a Loyalist Carolina might have exercised an irresistible attraction over Georgia and Virginia, and possibly as far away as New Jersey and Maryland. Sir Guy Carleton, by the exercise of sympathy and insight, had in recent years converted the French Canadians into very passable subjects of the British Crown; and, if he had been supreme at Charleston in June 1780, he might have succeeded in pacifying and conciliating the people of Carolina by a policy adapted to their customs, their aspirations, and their inherited national character. But Clinton, unlike Carleton, was a mere soldier, who could not emancipate himself from military traditions and precedents; and he fell stolidly to work on an attempt at governing South Carolina as Sir William Howe had governed New York, and had endeavoured to govern New Jersey and Pennsylvania.

The chief of the Executive, according to Clinton's arrangements, was the General in command of the local army. Order was kept by the Provost Marshal; justice, or what passed for justice, was administered

by military tribunals;[1] and the only civilian functionaries in evidence were Commissariat Agents and Inspectors, who most of them were in secret and profitable alliance with the greed and rascality of the Government contractors. Financial control, in any real sense of the word, had ceased to exist. Connivance was rife, and corruption rampant, as is almost sure to be the case under autocratic military rule, where the ruler is not a Gustavus Adolphus, or an Arthur Duke of Wellington. The citizens of South Carolina were robbed, and in many instances beggared, with very little regard to the politics of the victim. The storehouses of merchants were cleared of indigo and tobacco, and of the cotton which within the last ten years had become an article of export from the State. Stables and cow-sheds were emptied all the country over; and two thousand negroes were confiscated like so many head of cattle, and shipped off for sale in the best available markets. Hessian marauders, who knew where to look, dug up great quantities of the silver plate which had long been the special pride and fancy of the Southern planter; and the aggregate value of the prize-money which ultimately came to be distributed by the Commissioners of Capture reached the figure of three hundred thousand pounds sterling. The share of a Major General exceeded four thousand pounds; and our German auxiliaries, whether officers or privates, took care to vote themselves a still more handsome dividend before they brought the balance of their plunder into the common stock. There was no talk of the amnesty which should have been the accompaniment of so great and complete a military victory. Many leading Whigs were exiled to St. Augustine in Florida, — a spot to which American citizens now betake themselves, with-

[1] After the command in the Carolinas had been delegated to Lord Cornwallis he tried to improve matters by making every field-officer of the Loyal Militia into a justice of the peace. "That," said the London Morning Chronicle, "was supposed to be the full extent of his power of re-establishing civil government."

out any compulsion, in ever-increasing multitudes, but not during the most torrid months of a Southern summer. And in the first week of June 1780 Sir Henry Clinton, on the eve of his return to New York, issued in the King's name a proclamation summoning all Carolinians, who had not hitherto made public profession of their loyalty, to take an active part in settling and securing His Majesty's government, under pain of being considered as enemies and rebels, and treated accordingly. Historians of both nations, and of all parties, are agreed in the view that this unlucky manifesto was the point on which the continuance of the Revolution in South Carolina turned.

The men of South Carolina have never been the sort of folk with whom it was safe to trifle. Eighty years afterwards, without tremor or hesitation, they threw down the gauntlet to the central government of the United States under the impulse of an intense, if perverted, local patriotism; and in 1780 they were the same people as in 1861, with ruder and more primitive natures, and hardier habits, and far more intolerable grievances and provocations. There were few among them who could not use a rifle. Carolinian farmers and planters were said to eat more venison than beef, and more wild turkeys than tame geese; and, over and above the replenishment of their larders, they had an imperative and ever-present motive for keeping up their shooting. Captain John Stuart, the Superintendent of His British Majesty's Indian Affairs in the Southern Districts, had a great influence and popularity among all the Cherokee tribes, which he employed without stint or ruth in the promotion of what he regarded as King George's interest. In the spring of 1775, when the colonial difficulty began to assume a threatening aspect, Captain Stuart, and Governor Wright of Georgia, purchased, and attempted to import, some tons of gunpowder for distribution among the Cherokees; "as a means," so these two worthies alleged, "of keeping them attached to the British government." A twelvemonth afterwards the western

townships of South Carolina were desolated by a horde of savages. The farms and villages were laid in ashes; and several hundreds of men, and women, and children perished under the tomahawk and the scalping-knife, except such of them as were reserved for a death by tortures so hideous as to defy narration. After such an experience no husband or father who resided within a hundred miles of the Indian frontier dared permit his trigger finger to forget its cunning.[1]

The Carolinian insurgents were proficient in those three accomplishments which Colonel Daniel Morgan had pronounced to be the essential requisites of a soldier; for they could shoot, they could march, and they could starve. The distances that they travelled, — the short number of hours within which, after having failed or succeeded in one quarter, they turned up, an unexpected and most unwelcome apparition, in another, — would be incredible unless allowance is made for the special conditions of their mode of warfare. They operated in such small bodies that their whole party could move across country as rapidly and freely as a solitary individual. There was no halting and marking of time in the rear while the leading files were surmounting an obstacle; no crossing of columns, or congestion of traffic along the road, in those instances where there existed any road at all. They often had riding-horses, and sometimes saddles, but never a wheeled vehicle; for they took about with them no tents, no camp-kitchens, and not a

[1] The systematic encouragement of these Indian raids was a policy which in the end proved most cruel to the Indians themselves. When war ceased between Great Britain and America the red men looked forward with terror to the prospect of being given over to the vengeance of armed farmers whose houses they had burned, and whose families they had murdered. There exists a letter from a Superintendent of Indian Affairs, addressed in April 1783 to the British Commander-in-Chief at New York, reporting that the Creek and Cherokee tribes were in a state of violent agitation and despair over the news that peace was on the eve of being concluded. "The situation," (so this gentleman went on to write,) "of our poor unfortunate allies most sensibly affects me. They were ever faithful to me. I never deceived them. Your Excellency, I hope, will pardon me the liberty of saying I now feel for my own honour."

single load of baggage, nor a barrel of biscuit, beef, or rum. Each of them carried a rifle which he had handled ever since he was a lad of fourteen or fifteen, together with a rigidly economised store of powder and ball, a knife, a blanket, and a wallet of Indian corn parched and ground to powder. Four ounces of it, when stirred in water, made a ration of hominy; and the man was fed, — or at all events filled, — for five or six hours. In addition to this gruesome mixture they sometimes got sweet potatoes; and in places where game swarmed, and there was no enemy near enough to be alarmed by the report of a gun, they would kill a deer, and eat it without salt. They were none the worse fighting men on account of a strong dash of self-esteem. They knew their own worth, and were in the habit of comparing themselves very favourably with the militia of the Northern colonies. Those of them who assisted at the siege of Boston in the autumn of 1775 had brought home an account of General Washington's army which was not without its comic touches. They had much to say about the unmilitary bearing of the regimental commanders, and the longwinded eloquence of the regimental chaplains, and the diversity of age observable among the rank and file. "Such sermons!" said a Southern rifleman. "Such colonels, such boys, and such great-great-grandfathers!" A fortnight's campaigning in the swamps of South Carolina would most certainly have placed on the sick-list nine tenths of those old gentlemen who rallied round the flag so gallantly when New England first assembled in arms upon Cambridge Common.[1]

The strategy and tactics of the Republican partisans in the Southern States bore a close resemblance to those which afterwards were employed in the famous insurrection of La Vendée; and their military chiefs had much in common with the rural gentry under whose

[1] *Bolton's Private Soldier under Washington;* page 43.

guidance the peasants of Western France marched to battle in the years 1793 and 1794. The Carolinian insurgents were not organised into companies and battalions, and still less into brigades. They gathered themselves together in armed assemblages of loose formation, and fluctuating numbers; and the size of each band depended upon the personal qualities of the Commander, — on his local popularity, on the confidence which his character inspired, and, (above all,) upon his success in war. These chosen leaders were not necessarily natives of their State, though all of them had been settled long enough within its borders to be accounted good Carolinians. Some were Generals or Colonels of the Continental Army; but their followers regarded that circumstance as little as the Italian volunteers of 1859 and 1861 cared whether Garibaldi, and Bixio, and Giacomo Medici were, or were not, commissioned officers in the Piedmontese service. Conspicuous among them was Thomas Sumter, a Virginian between forty and fifty years of age, married to a lady of South Carolina, and domesticated in the neighbourhood where her family had always lived. Their house was burned over his wife's head by Colonel Tarleton's troopers, and Sumter thereupon betook himself to the field and the forest, and seldom slept beneath a roof until he had paid out his grudge many times over, on Tarleton in particular, and on the cause which Tarleton served. Sumter was a man of large frame, built and seasoned for martial toils and emergencies. He was a grand soldier, though a careless, and even reckless, leader in a war where excess of temerity was a less fatal defect than over-caution.

The most celebrated captain of guerillas in the Southern war, then and ever since, was Francis Marion; and in choosing a hero the popular voice is seldom wrong. Marion was a South Carolinian born, of Huguenot descent. He had thought deeply, and felt keenly, on the rights and wrongs of the quarrel between Parliament and the colonists; but he said very little about politics, or indeed about anything else, for he was

a mighty poor talker. He was short and spare, a featherweight in the saddle; and his charger, almost as famous as himself in a society where horses were the principal topic of conversation, could carry him fast and far. How the steed and the rider both of them remained unshot was a standing wonder throughout the Carolinas. In 1780 Marion was forty-eight years old; but he had preserved his health, and the more valuable attributes of youth, by vigorous and active habits, and strict sobriety. It was to his sobriety that, by a singular chance, he owed his opportunity of establishing a name among the foremost champions of the Revolution. He was with Lincoln when that general committed the irreparable blunder of planting his whole army down inside the walls of Charleston. Marion was invited to dinner at the house of a friend who, conformably to what was then the spirit of Southern hospitality, turned the key in the door, and announced to his guests that no one would be allowed to leave the room until full justice had been done to his Madeira. Marion, who never was ashamed of running away when the occasion called for it, jumped out of a window, and dislocated his ankle. He was placed in a litter, and sent away to be nursed at his country-house just in time to save his liberty; for Sir Henry Clinton, a very few days afterwards, had invested the town completely and impenetrably both by land and by sea.

After Charleston fell Marion disappeared a while from public view, changing his lodgings often, and hiding in the woods whenever the red-coats were reported to be in the vicinity. He gradually collected a very small party of his country neighbours, accoutred them with cavalry sabres fabricated by rural blacksmiths out of the circular saws of the timber-mills, and melted down pewter mugs and spoons to fill their pouches with bullets. He and his companions marched into the American camp at Hillsborough in July 1780; but their unmilitary aspect excited the ridicule of an army which itself, in point of drill and equipment, fell

a good deal below the standard of Potsdam and Versailles.[1] Baron de Kalb, who knew a soldier when he saw one, recognised the quality of the new-comers beneath their homely bearing, and their quaint and archaic trappings; but Horatio Gates sent Marion and his people away from the camp on an errand which served as an excuse for getting rid of auxiliaries so unworthy, in his opinion, to be commanded by the victor of Saratoga. On the sixteenth of August 1780 the American army was routed, and almost annihilated, in the battle of Camden. Five days subsequently a detachment of British infantry was conducting towards Charleston, as prisoners of war, the survivors of those gallant veterans of the Continental Line who had kept up the fight until de Kalb fell, and long after Gates had fled. Marion pounced down upon the escort, caught them at a disadvantage, captured every man of them, and liberated a hundred and fifty Marylanders whose future services to the Republican cause were well worth the trouble and hazard of a rescue. The fame of that exploit was carried far and wide throughout the Carolinas. Marion soon had a sufficiency of eager and sturdy recruits, and indeed something more than a sufficiency, for he did not love large numbers. From that hour onwards he experienced no difficulty in arming and remounting his followers. In the course of his operations he seized and appropriated horses, and swords, and pistols, and gunpowder in abundance, together with a great many Tower muskets which the consummate marksmen whom he led to battle would not condescend to use. The celerity of his move-

[1] "Colonel Marion, a gentleman of South Carolina, had been with the army a few days, attended by a very few followers, distinguished by small leather caps, and the wretchedness of their attire. Their numbers did not exceed twenty men and boys, some white, some black, and all mounted, but most of them miserably equipped. Their appearance was, in fact, so burlesque that it was with much difficulty that the diversion of the regular soldiery was restrained by the officers." *Narrative of the Campaign of 1780, by Colonel Otho H. Williams*, as quoted in Mr. Lossing's *Pictorial Field-book of the Revolution.*

ments, the infernal accuracy of his information, and the audacity of his onset confounded and dismayed, and in many cases turned into rebels and republicans, the Loyalist population over a very large tract of country. "Colonel Marion," wrote Lord Cornwallis in December 1780, "has so wrought on the minds of the people, partly by the terror of his threats and cruelty of his punishments, and partly by the promise of plunder, that there was scarcely an inhabitant between the Santee and the Pedee that was not in arms against us;" — and the space between the Santee and the Pedee rivers comprised half the immense area of South Carolina.

It was a merciless war; and many things were done on either side which may be explained, and in some instances excused, but which cannot legitimately be defended. The combatant armies in the Northern and Central States had been kept in strict discipline and obedience by martial law; and the generals in command were usually actuated by all that was most honourable in the martial spirit. Sir William Howe, and George Washington, did not regard the hangman's rope as a military weapon; and quarter was very seldom refused even in the crowning moment of a successful assault. But the contending forces in the Carolinas were largely drawn from irregular levies of political partisans, who hated each other with the acrimony of suspicious and quarrelsome neighbours, and who indulged themselves, freely and often, in a resort to that barbarism which, alike in ancient and modern history, has so frequently stained the annals of a domestic conflict. In May 1780, after Charleston fell, Colonel Tarleton, marching with incredible speed, caught up a detachment of Virginian infantry before they could cross the North Carolinian border. All attempt at resistance was soon over. The Americans laid down their arms; and then, for a full quarter of an hour, the Loyalists of the Legion continued to range the field, shooting down those who stood erect on their feet, and plunging sword and bayonet into the prostrate bodies of the wounded. The figures

reported in Tarleton's official despatch tell a story which explains itself. Five of his own people were killed, and twelve wounded. A hundred and thirteen of the enemy were slain on the spot; fifty-three were carried off as prisoners; and a hundred and fifty had been so riddled and mangled that they were not in a condition to be lifted into the carts. Tarleton went through the form of exacting from them, as they lay on the grass, a pledge never to bear arms against the Crown during the remainder of the war. He might have spared himself the trouble of taking their parole. They were tenderly nursed in the Presbyterian meeting-house by a few brave men and women who ventured to remain in the neighbourhood, but the greater part of them very soon died in agony. It was the worst fifteen minutes' work ever done either in King George's interest, or in the interest of the Loyalist population. The people of the district where the massacre took place were Scotch-Irish from Ulster, — hard fellows, industrious and bent on gain, who had hitherto been too busy over their farms to concern themselves with national politics. During the first five years of the Revolution they had doggedly refused to be convinced or persuaded when their minister exhorted them from the pulpit to take up arms in defence of civil liberty and religious equality; but Tarleton and his Legionaries converted them into rebels in the course of a single afternoon. They felt themselves revolted, and even personally insulted, by the horrid tragedy which had been enacted in their midst; and from that moment forwards they enrolled themselves among the open and determined adversaries of the Royal cause. And not they alone; for many hundred citizens of North and South Carolina, who had hitherto come no nearer rebellion than a secret and timid dalliance with Whig proclivities, now flocked to the bivouac and the battle in a vindictive temper which their local leaders, it must be admitted, showed little or no inclination to rebuke and control.

Evil breeds evil; and, before many months had

elapsed, the Virginians had an opportunity for retaliation of which they mercilessly availed themselves. On the twenty-fifth of February 1781 three hundred North Carolinian Loyalists, well armed and mounted, came in sight of Colonel Lee and his cavalry in the neighbourhood of Hillsborough. Deceived by a similarity in the uniforms they mistook their enemy for Tarleton's Legionaries, and they discovered their mistake too late. Lee hoped to obtain their surrender without a fight; but some of the Tories fired first, and then the Whigs fell on sword in hand. Colonel Lee lost one horse, and not a single trooper. Ninety Loyalists were killed, and but few of them got away unwounded. It was an obscure and confused story, and a most untoward incident.

Another baleful precedent had already been established by the politicians of the Revolutionary party. In 1779 a Loyalist rising was suppressed with small difficulty, and no great loss of life in the field; but, after the fighting was done, seventy of the captives were put upon their trial, and five were executed. Those who suffered were said to have been "more robbers than Tories," and some of them not even Tories at all; but the fact remains that they were sentenced and hanged, not for murder, or arson, or pillage, but on a charge of treason against the Republican government of South Carolina. The next step on the dark and downward path which led to internecine war was made by Lord Cornwallis. Shortly after his victory at Camden he sent a circular despatch to the commanders of all Royal garrisons and military posts, ordering, "in the most positive manner, that every militiaman who had borne arms under the Crown, and had afterwards joined the enemy, should be immediately hanged." He wrote for willing eyes. A large number of these poor wretches were taken out of jail, and sent to execution, sometimes straight away, and in other cases after a trial by Court-Martial which was nothing better than a ghastly farce. All America heard with a shudder of a dreadful deed which was committed in Georgia under pretence of obedience to Cornwallis's mandate.

Colonel Clarke of Virginia, with a party of his State militia, made an unsuccessful attack upon the town of Augusta, and was forced to retreat, leaving some of his wounded men behind him. Seventeen of them were hanged by Colonel Browne, and Colonel Cruger, the two Loyalist leaders; and several others were turned over to the Indians, who tortured them, and afterwards burned them alive. Retaliation, swift-winged, and of stern and fell purpose, was close at hand; for the Republicans soon had their turn of victory at King's Mountain, where they got into their possession a large crowd of Loyalist prisoners. Twelve of the captives were sent before "a mongrel Court, partly civil, and partly military," and nine of them, including two officers who held the King's commission, died on the gallows. Cornwallis was wrung to the heart with pity and horror by the unforeseen, but inevitable, consequences of his own policy. The numerous and passionate letters of remonstrance and self-justification, which he addressed to the American military authorities, were written under strong emotion; and it is easy, when reading between the lines, to fathom the depths of his regret and repentance. It was an act which stands in solitary contrast to all that preceded, or followed it, in his noble and humane career. As Viceroy of Ireland in the memorable and critical year of 1798, — when he was courageously asserting the claims of mercy against most of his subordinates, and nearly the whole of the society by which he was surrounded, — he must have had constantly in mind the terrible lesson which had been taught him in South Carolina during the autumn of 1780.

For some weeks after the surrender of Charleston there was a lull in the storm which bore the appearance of a permanent calm; but then the weather broke, and during the last six months of 1780 hostilities raged over the whole of South Carolina with a vehemence and continuity very rare in war. The earlier operations were to the advantage of the Royal cause. Camden was a smashing defeat for the American army; and next

morning Colonel Tarleton literally caught Sumter napping, killed and wounded a hundred and fifty of his men, and took at least twice as many of them prisoners. Sumter himself, who had been snatching a siesta sheltered beneath a waggon from the heat of a mid-day in mid-August, barely escaped with his life, and rode off leaving behind him hat, coat, and saddle, and unattended by a single companion. Those were knock-down blows for the partisans of the Revolution; but they soon regained their feet, and the fighting became fast and furious in every corner of the ring. It was reckoned that between July and December 1780 there were no fewer than twenty-seven battles or skirmishes on Carolinian soil. The war in the Southern States very soon assumed the character which it maintained till the end. Whenever a regular British force, comprising all the three arms, was brought into action in the approved British style, our soldiers, however bloody and stubborn might have been the conflict, seldom or never failed to remain masters of the field. But any small detachment of Royal troops, or Loyalist auxiliaries, was almost invariably worsted by the rushing tactics of the American leaders, and the deadly skill of the American marksmen. Colonel Sumter, who soon had enlisted another and more formidable band of followers, once more tried conclusions with his old adversary at Blackstock on the Tiger river. After a very sharp encounter, the details of which have always been in dispute, he at length proved to an astonished world that Colonel Tarleton and his Legionaries were not invincible; although Sumter himself carried away a bullet in the shoulder, — a price which he was very willing to pay for his success. And at Musgrove's Mills, in the same angle of South Carolina, a mixed force of British infantry and provincial Loyalists was disastrously routed by Colonel Shelby and his mounted riflemen. In a fair stand-up fight, where both parties did their best, a hundred and fifty of the Royal troops were killed and wounded as against less than a score of the Republicans. That disparity of loss was attributed to "over-shooting

on the part of the British;" to the promptitude with which those skilled lumberers of the Carolinian forests constructed a barricade of brushwood and fallen timber within the space of thirty minutes; and to the cool and deliberate aim which they took from behind their cover.

Major Patrick Ferguson of the British army, — a Scotchman of good birth, the son of Lord Pitfour, — had acquired a great and deserved reputation in the French wars. He had invented a breech-loading rifle, and was said to be one of the best shots in the service. Ferguson's specialty was his extraordinary power of raising and organising irregular troops. He had been appointed Inspector General of the Carolinian militia by Sir Henry Clinton; and it was largely due to his activity, and his personal popularity, that four thousand Loyalists had been enrolled and drilled, and distributed into seven battalions, some of which were already in camp, while others, after the example of the New England Minutemen, held themselves bound by an engagement to take the field at the shortest notice. Ferguson was a recruiting officer of a very different type from the crimps and slave-drivers, wearing Prussian and Hessian uniforms, and dignified by military titles, who had long been the curse of Germany. "He would," we are told, "sit down for hours, and converse with the country people on the state of public affairs, and point out to them, from his view, the ruinous effect of disloyalty."[1] Such manners, — which were not those of every Royal officer, even where he was not the son of a Lord, — endeared Ferguson to his subordinates, and secured for him their willing respect and eager obedience. Like so many colonels of native regiments in the history of our Indian empire he had an honourable, and venial, tendency to overrate the fighting capacity of the local troops who trusted and followed him. There were men of cool discernment on the staff of Lord Cornwallis who entertained an

[1] *Mr. McCrady's History of South Carolina in the Revolution.*

uneasy consciousness that Major Ferguson was in the habit of expecting a great deal too much from the Loyalist militia.

Towards the end of the spring of 1780 Major Ferguson constructed an intrenched camp in the neighbourhood of Fort Ninety Six, about fifty miles to the west of Broad river.[1] The Loyalists of the vicinity responded heartily to his call, and he was soon at the head of more than a thousand stalwart partisans. Ferguson, by comparison with other leaders in that dreadful war, was not accounted a cruel man; but even highly disciplined troops, when on active service, are never acceptable visitors in a rural community; and Ferguson's militia were not under rigid and exact control. They lived on the country. They turned their horses into the fields of standing corn. They shot down, and left lying about the woods, a great many more cattle than were required to feed the army; and their foragers and marauders, (for they had a full share of bad characters among them,) plundered the outlying farmhouses, carted away the beds, sacked the wardrobes, and in some cases went so far as to take rings off the fingers of the women. The Whig Borderers, who lived on the other side of the Alleghany range, showed a disposition to come to the assistance of their Carolinian brethren; and Ferguson, whose knowledge of human nature seems to have been defective whenever he was dealing with people of opposite politics to his own, announced that, if he had any trouble with the frontiersmen, he should march across the mountains, hang their leaders, and lay waste their territory with fire and sword. That message was pointedly addressed to Colonel Shelby, the victor of Musgrove's Mills, who was not a man to be lightly frightened. Shelby immediately rode fifty or sixty miles across hill and forest to the house of Colonel Sevier, his colleague in the County Lieutenancy of an enormous district, and settled with him all the preliminaries for an expedition

[1] The localities mentioned in this, and the next chapter, may be identified in the map at the end of the volume.

on an extensive scale which should anticipate the threat of a hostile invasion by carrying the war into Major Ferguson's own quarters.

On the twenty-fifth of September 1780 the entire military force of the western border met at Sycamore Shoals on the Watauga River, in the extreme north-east corner of what is now the State of Tennessee. It was a patriarchal gathering. Everybody who was still of an age to face privation and fatigue had come prepared to ride and fight; and the older men flocked into camp to taste the joy of eventful living, and to receive from the County Lieutenants instructions for the defence of the settlement during the absence of all the flower of its garrison. The clumsier and more antique firearms were left at home to resist, or scare, the Indians; while most of those who belonged to the field-force carried a weapon of unusual range and precision, known as the Deckhard rifle. The women were present in great numbers, to see their sons and husbands off; and the richer farmers had contributed the materials for a farewell feast which those who went, and those who stayed, might share together. No uniforms were visible and no badges of rank or authority. The Borderers, who each of them had brought his horse, were clad in homespun. They most of them had hunting-shirts, and many were shod with moccasins of their own manufacture. The officers had dressed themselves as civilians in those bettermost suits which they were in the habit of wearing on the race-course, in the church, and on the Justices' Bench in the Court House, — the three ceremonial meeting-places of that thinly planted and primitive society. Conspicuous among the members of the expedition were four hundred Virginian riders, better educated than most of the frontier settlers, and burning with political zeal, and no small infusion of religious enthusiasm. Their favourite end of the Bible was the Old Testament; and in their views on Church and State, and the respectability of their private lives, they bore some likeness to Cromwell's soldiers. They were in a fierce and dangerous

mood, because the news had reached them of that atrocious act of cruelty which had recently been perpetrated in Georgia upon men of their own State, and their own party. Their Colonel was William Campbell, of good social position, and in the prime of life. At first he held himself aloof from the movement with a frank and unabashed display of Scotch caution; but, when his mind was made up, he threw himself into the business with Scotch thoroughness. His personal reputation, as well as the numerical strength, and exceptional quality, of his following, obtained for him an acknowledged pre-eminence among the captains of the foray.[1]

When the leave-taking was done the cavalcade set forth, and rode in loose order as through a friendly country, shooting out spies ahead of them to the east and southward. They were followed by a drove of fat oxen which were to be killed for food; but by the end of the first twenty-four hours they had left their herd far behind. They were already very hungry when, on the sixth of October, they reached The Cowpens, a hundred and twenty miles in a direct line from their point of departure. The place took its name, — a name which three months afterwards became celebrated in American history, — from a large cattle-ranch owned by an English capitalist; and every trooper soon had his fill of "Tory beef." They needed all their strength, for a heavy task lay before them. At nine in the evening they remounted, and picked their way through the darkness and the drizzling rain. By daybreak their van had marched another eighteen miles. About noon on the seventh of October the rain ceased, a fine cool breeze sprang up, and Colonel Campbell was greeted with the intelligence that the enemy were awaiting him a short league to the northward, strongly posted on the flank of his line of march. Campbell's own people had trav-

[1] A remarkable description of the camp on the Watauga river, drawn from Ramsay's *Annals of Tennessee*, is given in the thirty-fourth chapter of McCrady's History.

elled fifty miles since they had had a sleep; but hardly a man of his nine hundred and ten was missing at the roll-call.[1]

As soon as Ferguson had learned that Colonel Campbell was on the war-path he issued a proclamation conjuring the people of Carolina to take arms, and quit themselves like men, unless they were prepared "to see their wives and daughters abused by the dregs of mankind." That was the opinion which he professed to hold about an army of Presbyterians, five of whose colonels were Ruling Elders.[2] If such had been his genuine belief, he ought undoubtedly to have remained on the spot in order to protect the women from insult and outrage; but he knew that he was writing nonsense, and a few days afterwards he reported to Cornwallis that he should bring his whole party into his Lordship's camp for the purpose of reinforcing the main British army. Ferguson, however, was in two minds; and he finally determined to linger on in the district until he had given the Borderers a lesson. He pitched his tents on a crest of King's Mountain, rising from sixty to a hundred feet above the woods by which it was entirely surrounded. The position might perhaps have been accounted impregnable in European warfare; but it was ill chosen as against Indian fighters for whom a forest was no obstacle, and against deer-stalkers who always preferred to shoot uphill. The top of the ac-

[1] Colonel Campbell was well served by a scout named Enoch Gilmer, who was very clever at concealing his true character. On the sixth of October Gilmer was found by his comrades in the parlour of a Tory, quietly seated at his dinner, and in high favour with his hostesses. He told Campbell, in the presence of the family, that he was a staunch King's man, and allowed himself to be pinioned, and ordered off to immediate death. Major Chronicle, a brave officer who did not live to see the sunset, interposed to prevent Gilmer being hanged at the gate of the farm, "as his ghost might remain to haunt the women, who were in tears;" but it was announced in their hearing that he would be executed on the first convenient tree. Once fairly out of sight of the house Gilmer was set free, and resumed his place in the ranks.

[2] *The Scot in America, and the Ulster Scot; Opening address to the Edinburgh Philosophical Institution on November 11, 1911, by His Excellency Mr. Whitelaw Reid.*

clivity was a rocky platform without any facilities for watering, and so small in area that it afforded no cover whatever to the defenders in case it was attacked from opposite quarters. The Major had not a single British officer with him; and his second in command was Captain Abraham de Peyster, who came of an ancient and wealthy Knickerbocker family in the city of New York. Ferguson's men had been carefully drilled in the regulation battle-tactics of the British army. Many of them carried bayonets; and the rest of them were provided with long knives specially adapted by the country blacksmiths to fit into the muzzle of their guns. Their gallant chief had good hope of victory in a hand-to-hand conflict with opponents who did not possess a bayonet among them.

Shortly before three in the afternoon the troop of Borderers approached the scene of action. They dismounted, and left their horses in charge of the men who were detailed for the purpose;[1] and, before plunging into the thicket, many of them threw aside their hats, and bound handkerchiefs round their heads. Colonel Campbell, and his principal lieutenants, went the round of their followers with stirring appeals to their patriotism, and very plain and elementary directions for their conduct in the fray. Every man was to "consider himself as an officer, and act from his own judgment." If they could do no better, they were to get behind the trees, or retreat; but they were on no account "to run quite off." Anybody who was afraid had permission to retire, and was requested to take himself away before the fight began. It is noticeable that nothing was said about aiming low, and firing slow; — a piece of advice which had never been omitted by American officers before any critical battle

[1] Whenever General Philip Sheridan, the greatest captain of mounted infantry that the world has seen, was leading forward his fighting line, he told off one trooper in every four to remain behind, and hold the horses. Sheridan described it as a providential arrangement because, according to his experience, twenty-five per cent. in any given force of soldiers were of no real use in battle.

in the Northern States. These backwoodsmen from the Alleghany Mountains had no more need of being told how to use their rifles than, when they were felling timber, they required to be instructed how to handle an axe. The Borderers moved to the attack in a continuous formation, extending round three sides of the Loyalist position. Their line went up the hill two deep, with such a distance between the files that each couple of men could keep a tree in front of them. When assailed by Indians, they made it a practice to fight in pairs, so that one comrade might reserve his fire until the other had reloaded his piece. That was their method of defence against a charge with tomahawks and scalping-knives; and it would be equally efficacious as against the bayonet.

They were physically tired; but they were in a state of violent excitement, which their leader shared. Colonel Campbell gave the word of command in the rough and ready language of battle. "Here they are, my brave boys!" (he cried). "Shoot like Hell, and shout like devils." Captain de Peyster recognised the menacing and discordant clamour which he had heard six weeks before at Musgrove's Mills, — that same "Southern yell," it well may be, which was answered by the Northern cheer on so many a hard-fought field during the War of the Secession. "These things," he remarked to Ferguson, "are ominous. Those are the yelling boys."[1] The woods were soon full of smoke and tumult. Both sides were magnificently led; and on the left wing of the assailing force the contest was sharp, and the issue sometimes doubtful. Campbell's men, and Shelby's, were three times driven down the hill; and thrice they recovered themselves, and won back the ground they had lost, and something more. Campbell fought on foot, and in his shirt-sleeves, in all those des-

[1] An old chronicler related how, before the battle of Nancy, Charles the Bold ascertained that there were Swiss in the enemy's ranks by the sound of their bulls' horns; —"ce qui, comme on dit, esbahit fort Monseigneur de Burguigne, *car déjà à Morat l'avoyt ouy.*"

perate charges, and repulses, and rallies. He seemed to bear a charmed life; but the day was not far distant when the charm was broken. Ferguson was struck in the hand by a bullet, and had two horses killed under him; and yet the shrill screech of his silver whistle continued to be heard wherever the combat was hottest. Meanwhile Cleveland and Sevier had encountered a less spirited resistance in the eastern quarter. Towards four o'clock the Loyalists began to lose courage. They gave way, sometimes by command, and sometimes without orders, until their whole force was at last huddled together upon the sky-line of the narrow ridge, exposed from head to foot, and encircled by a coppice swarming with sharpshooters at a distance within which trained riflemen could make sure of hitting their mark. White flags were held up, here and there, in token of submission, but Major Ferguson rode about, cutting them down with his own sword. When Captain de Peyster represented to him that success was hopeless he replied that he never would surrender to a parcel of banditti. He ordered those immediately around him to mount, and to charge as cavalry; but they were shot as fast as they could hoist themselves into the saddle. Ferguson himself received several fresh wounds, any one of which was mortal; and he died like a hero, with his head on the stones, and a foot entangled in the stirrup. His troops laid down their arms, and called for quarter, which was none too quickly or willingly given. The victors lost ninety of their number. A hundred and twenty of their opponents were killed outright, and as many more were badly wounded. Over six hundred others, hurt or whole, were led off as prisoners. Those among Ferguson's soldiers who got safe away were too few to be worth counting.

The battle of King's Mountain has justly been regarded as a turning-point of the war in the Southern States. It was a decisive trial of strength between the local adherents of the Crown and of the Revolution, under equal conditions of numbers and leadership, and

with no advantage of ground on either side; and it settled, finally and irreversibly, the question of the relative fighting value of the rival partisans. When American infantry in Royal pay, commanded by Royal officers, marched to the attack flanked and supported by British regiments of the line, they more than once had an honourable share in the successful result of a general engagement. But when the Loyalist militia were left to themselves, and ventured to fight an action on their own account, they had next to no chance at all. Lord Cornwallis was so disappointed and disenchanted that, in his official despatches, he did less than justice to the provincial Tories, although he was very far from complimentary in the epithets which he applied to their opponents. "The accounts," he wrote, "that I receive from Colonel Kirkland of the supineness and pusillanimity of our militia take off all my compassion for their sufferings. If they will allow themselves to be plundered, and their families ruined, by a banditti not one third of their numbers, there is no possibility of protecting them."[1] After the catastrophe at King's Mountain the Loyalist party was so cowed and prostrate that military men serving with Lord Cornwallis began to doubt whether such a party any longer existed. "The country," wrote a British officer, "is wholly leagued against us. We know nothing of the enemy's operations, and our operations are always known to them. One day we believe them to be utterly dispersed, and the next they reappear in force. This ignorance of ours cannot be regarded as a want of vigilance or activity on our part. It is the result of the general disposition of the country, in which we have nothing but enemies, and hidden spies."[2] One small English army could not be every-

[1] That letter was dated on the eleventh of November 1780, five days after King's Mountain. Two days subsequently Cornwallis again wrote: "If those who say that they are our friends will not stir, I cannot defend every man's house from being robbed; and I must say that, when I see a whole settlement running away from twenty or thirty robbers, I think they deserve to be robbed."

[2] *Stevens's Facsimiles in the British Museum.*

where at once. The Carolinas had been invaded, but they were as far as ever from being conquered; and the War in the South, for any practical result that came of it, was in the long run very little better than one of Governor Tryon's raids on a larger scale.

CHAPTER XVI

NATHANAEL GREENE. TARLETON AND MORGAN. GUILDFORD COURT HOUSE. THE FATE OF THE CAROLINAS.

GEORGE WASHINGTON had followed the course of events in Carolina with deep interest, and complete understanding. He had nothing to learn about the constitution of that remarkable society, and the conditions of that arduous, and very peculiar, warfare. A magnate among Southern planters, a Virginian horseman, an old Indian fighter, and a surveyor who had worked, and camped, and roughed it during three successive years in the Alleghany Mountains, he knew the scene and the actors, and he recognised the inner meaning of the whole situation. Washington was fully determined to do what he could to help, and, (above all,) to prevent less wise people than himself from marring and hindering. His reserve store of military resources, always scanty, had now been utterly exhausted by the fault of others. A fine regular army, which had been entrusted with the defence of the Southern States, had been captured wholesale, in a single day, by the strategical skill of Sir Henry Clinton, and the egregious obtuseness of General Lincoln. Washington had thereupon told off for service in the Carolinas a small, but very choice, selection of his Continental troops, whom he could ill afford to spare. He confided them to the charge of Baron de Kalb, over whom he intended to place a better general still; but Congress, in its infatuation, had persisted on conferring the chief command upon Horatio Gates; and de Kalb had perished, and most of his followers had been killed or taken. Washington thenceforward had nothing left to give. His own army was reduced to a mere handful; and the people of New England and the Central States, while

prepared to take the field in irresistible strength whenever it was a question of defending their own homes, showed no inclination whatever to march across the Potomac, and assist the Southern Whigs in their contest with the Royal army.

The defeat at Camden, however disgraceful and disastrous, brought with it an indirect consequence of incalculable advantage to the Republican cause. The members of Congress, instructed by a humiliating experience, themselves began to share those opinions about the value of their own interference in military questions which had long been held by every well-informed person outside their own doors. Washington thenceforward had a free hand, although by this time that hand was almost empty. The material means at his disposal had for the moment been entirely exhausted. He had no longer cannon, or money, or regiments to bestow upon the Carolinas; but even so he was not quite at the end of his resources, for he could give them a man. Who that man ought to be was clear to the mind of every American acquainted with the business of war, and sincerely attached to the Revolution. Alexander Hamilton, early in September 1780, treated a friend who was an influential politician at Philadelphia to some sarcastic comments on the valour of General Gates. "What," (he continued,) "will be done by Congress? Will he be changed, or not? If he is changed, for God's sake overcome prejudice, and send Greene. You know my opinion of him. I stake my reputation on the events, give him but fair play."[1] On the sixteenth of October the delegates of the three Southern States, to whom the matter was one of life and death, respectfully entreated the Commander-in-Chief to spare them the services of General Greene, "if it was not incompatible with the rules of the army;" and on the fourteenth of the same month Washington wrote a letter which produced a more potent effect upon the final

[1] Alexander Hamilton to James Duane; September 6, 1780.

issue of the war than any other despatch contained in the six long volumes of his military correspondence. "As Congress," (so he told Greene,) "have been pleased to leave the officer who shall command on this occasion to my choice, it is my wish to appoint *you*." Greene accepted the post without making any conditions or reserves, and in the quiet language of one who was in no mood for self-glorification. He regarded his mission as a desperate adventure, from which no American general had hitherto come back alive except as a defeated and dishonoured man.

The emergency forbade delay; and Washington begged Greene to remember that, owing to the pressing situation of affairs in South Carolina, he should endeavour to reach the spot as soon as circumstances would possibly permit. Nathanael Greene had been very happily married at the beginning of those turbid times. All of a sudden the war broke out, and for five long years he led an existence of anxious and absorbing labour, and constant peril, — seeing his wife for an occasional renewal of their honeymoon amidst such Arcadian paradises as the camp at Valley Forge. Early in October 1780, to his immense satisfaction, he had been nominated to succeed Benedict Arnold as military Governor of West Point. He at once sent off a special messenger to bring Mrs. Greene safely and quickly from their family residence in New England, calculating the hours, and the stages, of her journey with the ardour of a lover, and the minute precision of a military strategist. "In fourteen days she would be with him, and wild and craggy West Point would begin to look like home."[1] But then came General Washington's letter, announcing his appointment to the command of the Southern army, and urging him not to lose a moment in taking up his duties. Greene, who made a practice of exacting instant obedience from his own subordinates, was a soldier all round, and in all

[1] *The Life of Nathanael Greene, by George Washington Greene;* Book Third, chapter 13.

relations of the service, so that the word of his superior officer was a law to him. He allowed himself to ride ten or twelve miles up the Hudson river, on the chance of meeting his wife, and exchanging a brief farewell; but she did not make her appearance in time, and he bade her good-bye in a letter. "Alas!" he wrote. "I was obliged to return with bitter disappointment. My longing eyes looked for you in all directions; and I felt my heart leap for joy at the sound of every carriage."[1] He retraced his steps by starlight, and took the Southern road, travelling so fast that a lady in a chaise, or even on a pillion, could not hope to overtake him. The officers riding in his company, among whom was old Baron von Steuben, were deeply impressed by his carrying a volume of Latin poetry with him. That amount of erudition was beyond the range of the great King Frederic himself. Greene accomplished much business very rapidly at Philadelphia, and much at Richmond. On the twelfth of November he crossed the Potomac, and trespassed for a few hours on Mrs. Washington's hospitality. Next morning he wrote to her husband by candle-light that Mount Vernon was among the most attractive of abodes. "I do not wonder," he said, "that you languish so often to return to the pleasures of domestic life." On the twenty-seventh of the same month he was at Hillsborough in North Carolina, and five days afterwards at Charlotte, where Gates, who knew how to play his part on ceremonial occasions with dignity and propriety, handed over to his successor the poor remnants of an ill-starred army.

That army had been reduced to twenty-three hundred infantry, of whom only fifteen hundred were present with the colours. Many of them had lost their muskets, and many were so bare and ragged that it was impos-

[1] "As we shall be separated," (so he went on to say,) "by a great distance, and all our letters subject to be opened, you must be very careful not to write anything that will give the enemy a triumph, if it should fall into their hands. My letters will be written with equal caution. Therefore do not conclude that they contain a true index of my heart, or that they speak as I feel."

sible to bring them on to parade. Less than a thousand were trained soldiers of the Continental Line; and the Carolinian militia from the low country had shown themselves poor performers under fire. Greene reckoned the number of men, properly armed and decently clothed, whom he could place in the front of battle with any probability that they would remain there when the cannon-balls and bullets began to fly, at less than eight hundred. There were ninety cavalry troopers, and sixty gunners and bombardiers, — who were, however, more than enough to work the very few cannon which had escaped capture when Tarleton was picking up the spoils after the rout at Camden. The discipline, moreover, of Gates's regiments had fairly gone to pieces under their impostor of a general.[1] Greene found the troops at Charlotte on the very edge of starvation; for that countryside, which was far from rich in agricultural produce, had been eaten up over a circuit of many miles round. Nothing could be fetched in from a distance, because the whole apparatus of government transport, and all the teams and waggons hired or impressed from private individuals, had fallen into the hands of the British victors. The medical officers, — humane and public-spirited men, and singularly capable practitioners, as American surgeons already were, — reported that there was not a particle of lint, or a yard of bandage, in store. Greene had very insufficient house-room for his sick and wounded, and no stockade for the safe custody of any prisoners whom he might chance to make.[2] Before the army could take the field the maga-

[1] "This army," (so Greene told Alexander Hamilton, to whom he told everything,) "is in such a wretched condition that I hardly know what to do with it. The officers have such a habit of negligence, and the soldiers are so loose and disorderly, that it is next to impossible to give it a military complexion."

[2] There had been no place of security in which to keep the mass of captives who had been brought from King's Mountain. They had accordingly been liberated, after giving their parole never to carry arms against the American Government; and four-fifths of them had at once re-enlisted in the Royal militia.

zines had to be re-filled, and a great deal of mechanical work done which would demand the services of skilled artisans. But the Continental paper was at a discount of a hundred to one; people were unwilling to sell their goods, or their labour, for anything except gold and silver; and there was not a dollar of hard money beneath the lid of the army-chest. As soon as Greene had learned the full gravity of the task which lay before him, he disclosed the whole of his inmost thought, to his faithful comrade, — once, and never again, — in frank and manly terms. "I cannot," he wrote to Washington, "contemplate my own situation without the greatest degree of anxiety. I am far removed from almost all my friends and connections, and have to prosecute a war in a country at the best attended with almost insurmountable difficulties, but doubly so now from the state of our finances, and the loss of public credit. My only consolation is that, if I fail, it will not be accompanied by any peculiar marks of public disgrace. * * * My family is what hangs most heavy on my mind. My fortune is small, and misfortune or disgrace to me must be ruin to them."

Sobered and forewarned, but in nowise daunted, Nathanael Greene had accurately measured the complicated dangers, and the brighter possibilities, of a situation with which, both by character and training, he was eminently qualified to cope. Earlier in the war, at Washington's pressing request, he had reluctantly surrendered the command of his division, and had undertaken the duties of Quartermaster General during thirty trying months. In the course of that time, on more than one occasion, he proved that he had not lost the knack of fighting. At Monmouth Court House, and subsequently at Newport on Rhode Island, he repaired the errors of Charles Lee, and came to the rescue of the impetuous and incautious Sullivan, in the very crisis of two doubtful and mismanaged battles. He had kept his hand in as a combatant officer; and, — a fitting reward for his unselfish devotion, — he had

acquired an invaluable mass of experience as a military administrator. And now on his way down south, in November 1780, he stirred up the patriotism of the government departments, he appealed to the generosity of the richer classes in the towns which he visited, and, wherever he passed, he left a scene of energy and activity behind him. He applied to the Board of War, and to the President of Pennsylvania, for five thousand muskets and cartouch-boxes; and he received a third part of what he asked, which was as much as he had any right to expect in that season of universal destitution. He made a requisition for five thousand uniforms; but Congress had none to give him, and the private tailors refused to work except for ready cash. He therefore proceeded to raise a voluntary subscription among the Whigs of Maryland and Virginia for the purpose of clothing the Southern army; and in the meantime he desired his agents to set the Carolinian women cutting and stitching linen shirts for his soldiers. "If you cannot do better," he said, "they must be paid in salt."[1]

Greene attributed the favour which he enjoyed among the partisans of the Revolution in the Southern States to their consciousness that he possessed the esteem of George Washington. "I found myself," (so he wrote to Hamilton,) "exceedingly well received, but more for being the friend of the General than from my own merit." The recognition of that merit was more widely spread, and deeply rooted, than his modesty permitted him to believe. There is generally a period in the lives of distinguished men when the

[1] About this period of the war Anthony Wayne, who was more concerned about the martial appearance of his troops than any other American general, wrote an anxious letter to the President of Pennsylvania. "I thought," he said, "of an expedient of reducing the new, old, cocked, and flopped hats, and pieces of hats, to infantry caps; in which we succeeded very well, by making three decent caps out of one tolerable, and two very ordinary hats, to which we added as an embellishment a white plume and a comb of flowing red hair. We shall now try the experiment of making three short coats out of three old tattered long ones. * * * Without something done in this way we shall be naked in the course of two or three weeks."

known facts of their history do not altogether account for the rapid stages of their advancement, and when the true cause of their earliest successes must be sought in the daily and silent influence of their personal character upon the friends and neighbours among whom they were born and bred. Nathanael Greene had been elected a member of his provincial Assembly before he was turned of thirty. Shortly afterwards he joined a company of infantry volunteers in spite of unusual rebuffs and discouragements. He was a Quaker, and he had a stiff knee, which made him disagreeably conspicuous in a march past, though it did not prevent him from exerting his great bodily power in athletic contests, or even in the village ballroom. "You dance lamely," said one of his partners. "Very true," he replied, "but you see that I dance strong;" and exactly the same description in after years might have been applied to the vigorous, but somewhat awkward, tactics of his Southern campaigns. Certain fastidious members of the corps refused to admit a limping soldier among them; and, when that objection was overruled in Greene's favour, the Society of Friends expelled him from their body as a penalty for having carried arms in public. Those were the inauspicious conditions under which he commenced his military career; and yet in March 1775, when his countrymen found themselves confronted with the realities of war, private Nathanael Greene was taken out of the ranks in order to command the three Rhode Island battalions with the standing and title of Brigadier General. A story runs that the perilous office had previously been declined by two important people. When the third vote was announced as having fallen on Greene, he rose in his place, and said: "Since the Episcopalian and the Congregationalist won't, I suppose the Quaker must."[1]

The flattering confidence of Greene's fellow-citizens

[1] *Life of Nathanael Greene;* Book First, chapter 5.

was more than justified during the years which preceded his nomination to the Southern army. He had gained a high reputation, with plenty of good service to show for it. Men in authority, and especially such of them as had witnessed his conduct in battle, did everything in their power to provide the means of war for an officer who knew so well how to use them. General Knox had an acquaintance with Nathanael Greene which was not of yesterday. He had sold him many a volume of military history over the counter of his book-shop in Boston at a time when the customer still wore a suit of drab and a broad-brimmed hat, and when the tradesman already gave promise of settling down into a pacific, and remarkably portly, burgess. No one, to look at them, could have detected the great infantry general, and the great artillery general, of a future national army. Knox had admired the skill and coolness with which Greene brought his cannon out of the furnace of musketry at Germantown; he had watched him take ground to the [illegible] across the northern avenue of Trenton; and he [illegible]red [illegible] promised his old comrade a company of artille[illegible]unt[illegible]th "four field-pieces, and two light howitzers, as [illegible]ght[illegible]plete as possible." Colonel Pickering, Greene's successor in the post of Quartermaster General, sent him two companies of artisans; and President Reed, who had at his disposal the resources of Pennsylvania, — a province richer in commodities, and in credit, than the central government itself, — supplied him with a hundred waggons for transport and commissariat. Greene's soldiers now got something, although most certainly not too much, to eat; and discipline was speedily restored under the supervision of a general who issued rational and carefully considered orders, and who did not shrink from making an example of any one who defied or neglected them.[1] Reinforcements

[1] When Gates was in command his troops granted themselves their own furloughs, and came back to camp when they chose, if they ever came back at all. Greene, after due warning, put a delinquent on his

trickled into Greene's camp from various quarters, in small numbers, but of hopeful, and sometimes undeniable, quality. By the end of January 1781 he was joined by a body of Virginian militia, who had engaged themselves to serve for a period of eighteen months, and who had undergone a turn of drill at the hands of Baron von Steuben; and he had already gathered together the nucleus of an excellent force of dragoons. Horatio Gates had professed a very poor opinion of horse-soldiers; but Nathanael Greene thought otherwise, and his judgment was confirmed by the event. In the course of the next twenty months a whole series of desperate battles, in which he fell short of victory, were prevented from being crushing defeats by a well-timed charge of his warlike, and admirably officered, cavalry.

Nathanael Greene was not a general of the first order; but he had mastered the practice, and had sedulously and clearly thought out the principles, of war. He was a military adept, without the faults of a [illegible] pedant. The two closing years of his career, [illegible] were now immediately before him, supply a striking instance of the decisive results which may be accomplished by a capable and resolute soldier who has acquired, and who retains under the stress of responsibility, an intellectual hold upon the main business of his profession. Greene conceived and matured his plan of campaign during the first ten days of his journey towards the scene of action; and after his arrival at Philadelphia he unfolded his views in a letter to his superior officer, who signified his comprehension and approval of the scheme in comforting language. "Your friends," wrote Washington, "and the great public, expect everything from your abilities; but they both know full well the deranged condition of our Southern affairs; and neither, (I trust,) are so unreasonable as to expect impossibilities."

trial as a deserter; and he was convicted, and hanged in sight of the whole army. It was an effective check to a practice of which good soldiers in all ranks were heartily ashamed.

The strategy which Greene had determined to adopt was based upon a deep, and dearly purchased, respect for his adversaries. He was firmly persuaded that a solid force of British infantry, led by a really good general, was all but invincible in a pitched battle. On the other hand he thoroughly appreciated the prowess and discipline of his American veterans of the Continental Line; and he was broad-minded enough to attach a just value to the services of those local partisans who had preserved the flame of resistance alive in the Carolinas after one regular American army had been captured, and another utterly defeated. He informed Washington of his intention to keep under his own hand a body, however small, of tried and trained soldiers, — a flying army, (so he phrased it,) of eight hundred horse and one thousand infantry. With that slender force he now proposed to hold Lord Cornwallis in play while Marion and Sumter, at the head of their rough-riders, harassed the British in flank and rear, prevented them from foraging in the neighbourhood of their camp, waylaid their convoys, "and rendered it difficult for them to subsist in the interior country" out of reach of the provision-ships which brought them beef and biscuit from England. In the meanwhile he designed, whenever an occasion presented itself, to lend some of his best infantry and cavalry to one or another of his own trusted lieutenants for the purpose of falling upon any detachment of British troops which was at a distance from its supports. It was a sound policy; but Greene was none the less aware that the situation contained a very serious danger. He might refrain from spontaneously courting a trial of strength with Lord Cornwallis; but, in the last resort, he could not openly and visibly shirk a general engagement without forfeiting the confidence, and paralysing the efforts, of the Revolutionary party throughout the whole of the Southern States. He calmly and deliberately prepared himself to face a very formidable prospect, and a most unthankful task. All the happy chances, and bright

successes, of the campaign would fall to others, while he himself could never hope to fight a battle with fair assurance of victory, or indeed without incurring the risk of a total and irrecoverable overthrow. Greene, like another famous American warrior, three generations afterwards, presented a rare example of that unselfishness which is the loftiest moral attribute of the military commander. A contemporary of Ulysses Grant wrote thus of his friend and hero. "He had two great qualities, unity and steadiness of purpose, and, (best of all,) great magnanimity to those under him. Confident in himself, he seemed to have no jealousies or petty faults; and he sought to get the very best men for his subordinate commanders, and to award them all possible credit instead of grasping it for himself." That was true with regard to General Grant; and, between December 1780 and December 1782, it was true to the letter of Nathanael Greene.[1]

The American army in the Southern States was very small; and, the smaller an army, the more marked is the effect produced by the military capacity, and the personal exertions, of its officers. Greene had found, or brought with him, a large and prime assortment of coadjutors and subordinates. He had von Steuben for his drill-master, and Kosciusko for his chief engineer. His Adjutant General was Colonel Otho Williams; and his mounted troops were led by Colonel William Washington, and Light Horse Harry Lee, two Virginian gentlemen who already were famous soldiers, although they were so fortunate as to count little more than fifty years between them. Among several infantry officers

[1] The passage relating to Grant is from the pen of John Murray Forbes of Massachusetts, who, throughout the War of the Secession, did at least as much for the restoration of the Union as any other private citizen in the Northern States. General Sherman put the matter more briefly. "Whenever," he said, "I was in a tight place I knew that Grant would help me out of it."

of high merit the foremost was Daniel Morgan of Morgan's Rangers, the sound of whose whistle had been heard by friend and foe in the most desperate and decisive battles of the war. Congress, with less unwillingness than it usually exhibited in the case of a distinguished and deserving servant, had recently promoted him to the rank of Brigadier General. Morgan was now approaching the termination of his career, for he was considerably past the middle point of life, and that life had been spent amidst hardships and horrors which would long ago have broken down a slighter man. In 1755, as a youth of high promise and noble bearing, the champion of his countryside in all manly sports, he accompanied the store column of General Braddock's army on the fatal expedition to Fort Duquesne. Morgan was a man of independent position, who drove his own waggon and horses; but in the course of the march he was subjected to the barbarous punishment of five hundred lashes for a pardonable act of resentment and self-respect which infringed the regulations of military discipline. The circumstances of the story were such that he gained, rather than lost, in credit; and not long afterwards he had an opportunity of displaying such personal valour, and such a faculty for command, that he received the King's commission as lieutenant in a colonial regiment. He was frightfully wounded by a bullet in an Indian battle, where he saved his life, and his scalp, by the exercise of an iron will, and by self-possession in the extreme of agony and danger. And in the first winter of the Revolutionary War he had taken part in the toils and severities of that terrible journey through the wilderness from Connecticut to Quebec, when hardly one out of every two of Benedict Arnold's followers reached their destination alive.

During the opening weeks of 1781 Cornwallis lay at Winnsborough, in South Carolina, halfway between the Catawba and the Broad rivers. His troops, taking into account their numbers, quality, and equipment,

were reckoned at four times the fighting value of their opponents, — as long, that is to say, as they were kept united in a compact mass under the hand of Cornwallis himself. Greene arrived at the conclusion that the best receipt for dividing the enemy's army was to divide his own; and he accordingly handed over to General Morgan some hundreds of his best infantry, and a handful of dragoons commanded by Colonel Washington. He established the remainder of his force in a strong position on Mount Cheraw, sixty miles to the east of Winnsborough, while Morgan was operating about as far to the westward. "I am here," wrote Greene, "in my camp of repose, improving the discipline and spirits of my men, and the opportunity of looking about me."

He had looked about him to some purpose. Cornwallis, taking exactly the course which Greene had anticipated, despatched Colonel Tarleton with orders to attack and crush Morgan as a preliminary to dealing with the American army on Cheraw Hill. Tarleton had with him his own Legion, both horse and foot; a very few Royal dragoons; and two field-pieces, together with the Seventh and Seventy-first infantry regiments of the British Line. By that period of the war, and at that distance from home, a regiment was too grand a name for a body of troops which had in most cases shrunk to the size of two or three full companies; and Tarleton's total numbers fell just short of eleven hundred men. Morgan's people did not quite reach the thousand; and two thirds of them were local militia. He awaited Tarleton at The Cowpens, with the swift and deep current of the Broad river immediately in his rear. The American general has been blamed by military critics for choosing a position which was not covered by a swamp, and for fighting with his back to an impassable stream; but on both these points Morgan held a strong opinion of his own, which he expressed with characteristic frankness. "I would not," he said, "have had a swamp in view of my

militia for any consideration. They would have made for it, and nothing could have detained them from it." And, (according to his own account,) if he had been foolish enough to cross the river, one half of them would have abandoned him as soon as they found themselves on the safe side of the water.

The old waggoner, as Morgan liked to call himself, knew very well what he was about. He placed in loose order, among the trees of a convenient plantation, his Georgian and Carolinian militia, — picked marksmen for the most part, and very keen to shoot their adversaries, although they entertained a definite, and almost insuperable, objection to being shot themselves. The Marylanders of the Continental Line were drawn up on a ridge at a short distance to the rear; while behind them again was William Washington with a couple of hundred mounted men. On the seventeenth of January 1781 Colonel Tarleton, who had started many hours before dawn, came on to the ground at eight in the morning after an exhausting march in the pitch dark over deep ravines, and swollen torrents. He allowed his soldiers no time for repose or breakfast, and at once sent them forward to the attack. In front was the Seventh regiment, largely composed of recruits, with the infantry of Tarleton's Legion on their right; while the Seventy-first, which was a veteran corps, advanced in support at an interval of a hundred and fifty paces. Some of the younger British soldiers let off their muskets too soon; but the Americans within the edge of the wood were silent until they could discern the gold lace on the uniforms, and could tell a serjeant from a private by his carrying a halbert instead of a gun. When at last they opened fire the commissioned and non-commissioned officers went down in numbers; but Tarleton's second line soon overtook the troops in front of them, and carried them forward to an attack with the bayonet. Their adversaries promptly retreated, —or rather, to speak more accurately, ran away, — holding tight to their

rifles, and keeping their wits about them; and the Royal infantry, in a confused throng, surged on to the assault of Morgan's central position. The Marylanders however, when their turn came, stood firm and aimed straight; and Colonel Washington, choosing his moment, swept round the flank of Morgan's line, and fell upon the rear, and the right wing, of Tarleton's army.

The American cavalry bore down in a formidable column. There was a large party of mounted riflemen in the rear, and in the van were four score Virginians who had been taught to charge home, and who rode horses from their native State of a breed big and strong enough to carry George Washington through a long day's fox-hunting. A single troop of British dragoons, on sorry steeds picked up in the marsh-country of the Carolinian sea-board, charged gallantly, but charged in vain; and Tarleton, who by this time had arrayed the cavalry of his Legion in line of battle, gave them the signal to move forward, and repulse the enemy. He now learned, all too late, the painful lesson that a commanding officer has another, and perhaps even a higher, duty than that of conducting his soldiers in battle. A long course of license and plunder had relaxed the springs of discipline; and, when Tarleton ordered his followers to charge, "they did not," (to use his own quiet expression,) "comply with the order." Meanwhile the Georgian and Carolinian militia, who had run as far as they felt inclined, halted, and recovered their formation. They had every facility for deserting their comrades, since their horses stood all saddled and bridled for instant use in a grove of young pines; but nevertheless they returned to the combat, and took up their station on the flank of the Marylanders. Things began to look very serious for Tarleton. He placed himself at the head of his cavalry, and bade them follow him to the attack of a foe whom they outnumbered, whose horses were blown, and whose ranks

were scattered. "The weight of such an attack," (according to Tarleton's own story,) "might yet retrieve the day, the enemy being much broken by their late rapid advance. But all attempts to restore order, recollection, or courage, proved fruitless. Above two hundred dragoons forsook their leader, and left the field of battle."[1] The main body of the British army was now in a plight resembling that of Charles the First's foot regiments at Naseby after his horse had been routed. The officers and gunners of the Royal Artillery, — who, unlike Tarleton's troopers, had been trained to a sense of military honour in the school of old General Phillips, — were cut down to a man, fighting hand to hand in defence of their cannon. Of the foot-soldiers some laid down their arms, and others broke their ranks and fled; but flight, under the circumstances, was for them as hopeless as resistance. The officers of the Legion, who had scorned to abandon their chief, forced a path to liberty with sabre and pistol through the press and tumult of the hostile cavalry; and, before Tarleton left the scene of action, he had crossed weapons with Colonel Washington himself. It had been a battle in which the rifle had outdone the musket. The loss of the victors was small to insignificance, while among the British dead one in every eight was a commissioned officer. Morgan captured six hundred prisoners, a hundred horses, eight hundred firelocks, two pieces of artillery, all the baggage, "all the music," and the colours of an English battalion. That was a mischance which no commander of a line regiment throughout the service could forget, or pardon; and the affair at The Cowpens proved a death-blow to Tarleton's reputation. The senior officers of the Seventh and the Seventy-first, veterans old enough to have fought under Prince Ferdinand and the Marquis of Granby in the German war, came forth from captivity on their parole in an

[1] *Tarleton's History; Edition of 1787;* pages 217 and 218

angry and critical mood. "It was the consequence," (so they grumbled,) "of trusting such a command to a boy like Tarleton."

So great were the distances, and so difficult the travelling, that a week elapsed before Greene was informed of the brilliant success which had been won, (as an old Roman would have said,) under his auspices. There was joy in the Republican camp. Otho Williams informed Morgan that the troops on Cheraw Hill had fired a *feu de joie*, had sworn that the victors were the finest fellows upon earth, and had drunk their health in cherry-bounce. Nathanael Greene's first feeling was of exultation. He commenced a letter to his wife in high spirits, discoursing to her, with a rustic's habit of observation, about the charms of a Southern winter.[1] But he soon relapsed into a graver mood. "I am of a Spanish disposition," he wrote, "always the most serious when there is the greatest run of good fortune, for fear of some ill-fated stroke." He had already begun to reflect upon the exceptional dangers of the situation, and upon the proud spirit, and the martial fibre, of the general who was opposed to him. It was certain that Lord Cornwallis would never sit down quietly under the reverse which had befallen him. He was sure to retaliate promptly, and with all the strength at his disposal; and that strength, though gravely impaired, was still formidable out of all proportion to the power of his adversary. In the course of the previous month General Leslie had brought more than two thousand English and German regulars from New York to Charleston; while the levies of North Carolinian and Virginian militia, the only reinforcements upon which Greene could count, were two hundred miles away, undergoing the process of being

[1] "The birds are singing, and the frogs are peeping, in the same manner as they are in April to the Northward; and vegetation is in as great forwardness as at the beginning of May."

shaped by Baron von Steuben into what was as yet a very distant resemblance to real soldiers. The news from The Cowpens must have arrived in the British camp at Winnsborough in a third of the time which it had taken to reach Cheraw Hill; and, for all that Greene knew, Cornwallis might already be at Morgan's throat. When Morgan had been destroyed, his own turn would speedily come; and a lost battle in the heart of the Carolinas would mean the annihilation of the American army, and a blow of portentous gravity to the Republican cause.

Greene's native sagacity had been enlightened, and not beclouded, by long and diligent study of the art of war. The decision at which he now arrived was the making of his fame; and that decision led, by an unbroken chain of consequences, to the catastrophe at Yorktown which finally separated America from the British Crown. He determined, as the least of risks, and the most hopeful of all possible enterprises, to fall back without delay upon his own base of supply, and to attract Cornwallis after him. He made over the army on Cheraw Hill to Major General Huger, with orders to start at once on the journey northwards; and then, accompanied by a single aide-de-camp, and a serjeant's guard of dragoons, he rode a hundred and fifty miles, under pouring rain, through a district swarming with Tory partisans, until he reached General Morgan's bivouac on the upper waters of the Catawba river. "The fate of the South," (it has been truly said,) "depended upon Morgan's little army; and Greene felt that his own place at this critical moment was in front of Cornwallis."[1] Lord Wellington, in April 1811, rode the same number of miles, with an escort of much the same size, through as rugged and as dangerous a country, in order to visit Marshal Beresford on the eve of the battle of Albuera. An army is fortunate when it has a general who is never so happy as on horseback, and who looks into everything with his own eyes.

[1] Greene's *Life of Nathanael Greene;* Book IV, chapter 9.

Morgan had swiftly and dexterously withdrawn his troops and his prisoners from the field of battle, and had already accomplished the most critical stage of what proved to be a long and arduous retreat. He was stricken by fever, and crippled and tortured by rheumatism; and, (as the event showed,) he had not another fortnight's work left in him. But Greene was now at hand to take over a larger, and ever larger, share of the responsibilities, to press forward the march, and to baffle and evade Lord Cornwallis, who was already close upon his heels. Military critics, when dealing with the earlier years of the War of Independence, profess to find in the strategy of the English and American generals little except lost opportunities, and awful warnings; but, from this point onward, they gladly admit that valuable lessons may be learned by example. "A most exciting game," (Mr. Fiske writes,) "was kept up for the next ten days, — Greene steadily pushing north-eastward, on a line converging to that taken by his main army under General Huger, and Cornwallis vainly trying to get near enough to fight." With that object in view the English commander spared no exertion, and shrank from no sacrifice. He had spent two days over the destruction of his superfluous baggage, and of every other burden which interfered with the mobility, and was not absolutely necessary for the existence and efficiency, of his soldiers. They, on their part, displayed an admirable temper. They looked on, sadly but passively, while their barrels of rum were all staved in at a time when, if ever, rum would be wanted, and under circumstances which precluded the possibility of a renewed supply; and they cheerfully took over, and stowed away in their haversacks, the pittance of flour which henceforward was their only certain resource for subsistence. Cornwallis demanded from his men nothing which he himself was not prepared to give; and the most surly private could not complain at being called upon to share, and share alike, with such a commanding officer. "It was a new phenomenon in a modern army

to behold a general's quarters incapable of affording a glass of wine, or of any kind of strong liquor, and his table as destitute of anything orderly or comfortable, and even of furniture, as a common soldier's."[1]

A feature of this celebrated retreat was the succession of unbridged rivers which the pursuer and the pursued had both of them to cross, — the Catawba, the Great Pedee river, the Cape Fear river, and the Dan.[2] Greene, who never forgot to provide the mechanical appliances of war, and who was well qualified to lend a hand himself in the manufacture or repair of them, took with him on wheeled platforms enough boats to ferry over his not very numerous army; but Cornwallis had not a single team of draught-horses to spare for such a purpose. It was all that he could do to lead along his hospital stores, his salt, and his spare ammunition, together with four waggons which were reserved for the sick and wounded. Among the reinforcements that General Leslie had brought down from New York were two weak battalions of the Guards, numbering together a few hundred men and officers drawn promiscuously from the three regiments of Household infantry. As always has been the case, it was said in London that the Guards were too fine gentlemen for the rougher business of war; and, as always has been the case, that sort of gossip was contradicted by the fact when the campaign opened.[3] The British army reached the south bank of the Catawba

[1] *History of Europe in the Annual Register for 1781*, chapter 4.

[2] These rivers were all of them traversed by General Sherman's army during his famous march, at a season of the year when the floods were out. On one occasion, after the column had been toiling and floundering for miles through the water which filled the valley, a soldier was overheard exclaiming to his comrades: "Blame it all! We seem to have struck this river lengthways."

[3] "Before the present war the Guards were considered in rather an unmilitary light, effeminated by the luxuries of the metropolis, and too long accustomed to idleness to make any conspicuous figure in the field. But their conduct in America has effaced every idea of that kind; for they have in almost every action behaved nobly." *Morning Chronicle and Morning Herald of 1781.*

on the twenty-eighth of January 1781; but heavy rain had fallen, and the river was full to the brim, and impassable on foot. Three days afterwards, when the floods had partially subsided, Cornwallis marched his troops six miles down stream to Cowan's Ford, where the water was still waist-deep, and five hundred yards across. The Guards led the way, holding their muskets high and dry, and with full cartridge-boxes strapped at the nape of their necks. It was a very dark night, and the roar of the river drowned the splash of the advancing column; but at last the British van arrived within the glare of the American watch-fires. An alarm was given; and a party of North Carolinian militia, who had been stationed to watch the ford, hurried to their posts, and began to shoot. A local Tory, who had hitherto acted as guide, was frightened, and escaped to the rear; and the front files of the Guards mistook their bearings, stepped off the paved causeway of the ford, and found themselves in four feet of rapid water. Their brigadier general was rolled over and over by the current; the colonel of their leading battalion was killed; and the horse which carried Lord Cornwallis was hit by a bullet, and fell dead after it reached land. But the Guardsmen waded steadily forward; and, as soon as they got ashore, and had scrambled up the bank, they made very short work indeed of the enemy. That experience of a crack English regiment produced an indelible impression upon the minds of the North Carolinian militia.

The time unavoidably, and not ingloriously, consumed by the British general over the passage of the Catawba River afforded Nathanael Greene a respite which he used to much advantage. That start of seventy hours which he had gained upon Lord Cornwallis enabled him to conduct his march in accordance with the established and well-ordered methods of military discipline. He knew the ruinous effect of a hurried and headlong retreat upon the moral and material condition of an army. His local militia, indeed, lost heart under the

stress of toil and privation. All except eighty or a hundred of them deserted as they passed through the vicinity of their respective homes, the very captains and majors setting them the shabby and faint-hearted example; but Greene succeeded in keeping what he called "the flower of the army" together. But his poor fellows had not much of the bloom or colour of the flower about them. Their uniforms had long been unrecognisable; their shoes gave out; and there was only one blanket for every three soldiers. Snow fell sometimes, and rain often; and the watercourses were so numerous, and so full, that the men were frequently soaking wet from the belt downwards. There must have been a flame of patriotism burning within them to have maintained their vital warmth through three such weeks of winter. The track of the column was marked, mile after mile, by blood-stained footprints on the broken and frosty ground. Half of the light troops remained all night awake, and on the alert; "and at three in the morning the whole body was again under arms, pressing forward to secure a tranquil breakfast, their only meal."[1] Greene, like Pichegru on his first campaign, slept one hour out of the twenty-four, writing till long past midnight, and rising from a snatch of slumber to go the rounds with a lantern, and visit every sentry at his post. On the ninth of February 1781 General Huger rejoined his commanding officer at Guildford Court House, and Greene once more saw his whole army around him. He was now within reach of the Dan river, the northern boundary of the Carolinas, beyond which safety lay.

General Greene's final arrangements were nothing short of masterly, and evoked the unqualified admiration of the cleverest and most discerning of his opponents.[2]

[1] *The Life of Nathanael Greene;* Book IV, chapter 10.

[2] "Owing to an excellent disposition, which was attended by some fortunate contingencies, General Greene passed his whole army over the river Dan on the 14th, without receiving any material detriment from the King's troops. Every measure of the Americans, during their march from

He had commissioned a trustworthy subordinate to collect all the country boats at a chosen point on the south side of the stream, while Kosciusko was engaged on the north bank in throwing up an earthwork to protect the crossing. Then he again divided his forces, and handed over seven hundred cavalry and light infantry to Colonel Otho Williams, with instructions to manœuvre with the object of distracting the attention, and misleading the judgment, of the British commander. Williams, handling his troops with coolness and cunning, drew Cornwallis after him in a westerly direction under a false impression that the main American army was in front of him; and a few days afterwards Greene crossed the Dan river in peace, with all his men, and all his artillery and waggons. The news that he and his followers were safe on Virginian soil was accepted throughout the States with deep relief, and with satisfaction almost as keen as would have been aroused by the tidings of a victory. Washington expressed to him the general sentiment in scrupulously measured, but sincere and adequate, words. "You may be assured," (so the Commander-in-Chief wrote,) "that your retreat before Lord Cornwallis is highly applauded by all ranks, and reflects much honor upon your military abilities."

Greene was right well pleased to give his army a few nights of sound sleep in the comparative comfort of a stationary camp; but Washington had sent him down South for a definite purpose, and he was aware that he could not re-conquer the Carolinas by remaining safe and quiet in Virginia. He had come seven eighths of the way to meet his reinforcements; and, such as they were, they assembled around his standard in quick succession. On the twenty-third of February, taking his fate in his hands, he re-crossed the Dan river; and, after three weeks of skilful but inconclusive manœuvres, less interesting to the general reader than to the professor

the Catawba to Virginia, was judiciously designed and vigorously executed." *History of the Campaigns of 1780 and 1781, by Colonel Tarleton;* chapter 4.

at a military college, he deliberately placed his army in position to await the attack of Lord Cornwallis. Cornwallis, who had exhausted his stores, and whose line of supply was entirely blocked by the enterprise and activity of the American cavalry, was on his side anxious for the encounter. Greene's head-quarters were at Guildford Court House, amidst a mass of forest interspersed with patches of arable land some five or six acres in extent. The ground had many features in common with that Virginian Wilderness where, eighty years afterwards, Jackson and Hooker, and Grant and Lee, struggled for the mastery. The Americans numbered four thousand three hundred men; but most of them were militia whom their commander would gladly have exchanged for a couple of old regiments from the division which he had left behind him in General Washington's camp on the Hudson river. The army, — in size, in the character of its respective parts, and, (more especially,) in the order of battle which its commander thought fit to adopt, — bore a close and curious resemblance to a Roman Legion in the middle period of the Republic. The troops were drawn up in three lines, one behind another, with a short quarter of a mile between each. In front stood the half-trained, and half-disciplined, contingent from North Carolina. The Virginian militia were in the second line. Some of their privates, and most of their regimental officers, had served in the regular army; and their brigadier was Edward Stevens, a proud and fiery son of the Old Dominion, who was resolved that the soldiers under his charge should not discredit their native State. Stevens had been at the battle of Camden; and, to guard against a repetition of that shameful scene, he placed sentinels all along his rear with directions to shoot the first man who left his station. The third line was composed of veteran Continental infantry, the Triarii of the Southern army; while Harry Lee's Legion, and Colonel Campbell with some of his riflemen from King's Mountain, were on one flank, and Colonel Washington's dragoons on the

other. These arrangements gained the admiration of a deeply interested critic and eyewitness. "The post," wrote Colonel Tarleton, "occupied by General Greene on this occasion was extremely well chosen, and the manner of forming his troops unexceptionable. The reasons which now induced him not to decline an engagement equally indicated his wisdom, and his professional knowledge."

It was the fifteenth of March, in the year 1781. "There had been a light frost in the night, and the morning was cold; but the sky was clear, and the sun rose bright, and there was a bracing and exhilarating freshness in the air."[1] The Americans got their breakfast comfortably, and the day was half-spent before Cornwallis came in view. Greene rode up and down the ranks of the North Carolinian militia explaining to them the strength of their position, and giving them their orders in a clear, loud voice. "Three rounds, my boys;" he said, "and then you may fall back." It was a modest claim on the part of a general; but, like Morgan at The Cowpens, Greene judged it best not to pitch his requirements too high. The British had left their encampment at dawn, and had started fasting; not from any want of consideration on the part of their commander, but because there were no provisions for them to eat. They were tired as well as hungry, for they had already marched twelve miles, and there had been sharp skirmishing on the road. Cornwallis, who had about two thousand men with him, disposed his whole force in one long row of battalions, with no reserves in support. It was a hazardous experiment; and yet, in a thickly wooded country, anything was better than to be out-flanked; and the quality of the regiments, whether English or German, was such that there was no weak spot in the line. At half past one in the afternoon our army swept forward like the tidal wave on a broad river. The Carolinians were ensconced behind trees, with two

[1] *The Life of Nathanael Greene;* Book IV, chapter 11.

hundred yards of exposed ground in front of them over which an assailant had to pass; but, before the British came within striking distance, the Americans threw down their rifles and muskets, many of which had not been discharged, and fled for their lives. It was long before they stopped running. Ten of their number were reported as killed or wounded; and more than five hundred, (to employ Greene's own expression,) went straightaway home "to kiss their wives and sweethearts."[1] Stevens and his Virginians, with Lee and Campbell to help them, bore themselves very differently. They stood up to their work like soldiers; they shot like backwoodsmen; and, when at last they were driven in, (for nothing could withstand the British onset until its primal energy had been expended,) they retired very slowly, contesting every rood of coppice and thicket which they traversed in their retreat. The ranks of the Royal troops were woefully thinned, and in much disorder, when at length they penetrated within sight of Guildford Court House, where they at once came in collision with two battalions of Marylanders, and a small brigade of Virginian regulars.

There ensued a desperate and deadly conflict, which surged to and fro through woods and across clearings, with alternations of fortune the hour and the circumstances of which no man had leisure accurately to note. The officers on both sides were prodigal of themselves; and the men knew, and did, their duty. Cornwallis subsequently told General Phillips that the fate of the battle was long doubtful. "We had not," he wrote, "a regiment or corps that did not at some time give way." The British Guards, observing their ancient and ingrained tradition, as it was afterwards observed at Talavera, were forward and eager beyond the bounds of prudence. They broke into the hostile lines, ahead of their comrades on either flank, and captured two pieces

[1] "They left the most advantageous position I ever saw without scarcely firing a gun. None fired more than twice, and very few more than once, and near one half not at all." Greene to Washington; March 18, 1781.

of artillery; but in the confusion of their advance they were roughly encountered by a fresh battalion of good infantry, and they had Colonel Washington's cavalry among them for a space of many minutes. They lost that day more than two hundred of their four hundred and sixty men, and eleven of their nineteen officers. It was the opinion of Colonel Tarleton that, if Greene had followed up his success, and had occupied a plot of commanding ground which dominated the American position, and which cut the British army in two, he must infallibly have won the victory. Nathanael Greene could fight a stout and strong battle; but he was not a Benedict Arnold, and he let slip an opportunity which his adversary took very good care that he should never recover. The charger which Cornwallis rode had been shot under him, and he was mounted on a common troop-horse. "The saddle-bags," (said one who had watched and accosted him,) "were under the creature's belly, which retarded his progress owing to the vast quantity of underwood spread over the ground."[1] Cornwallis just then was no model for an equestrian statue; but he had got himself carried to the right spot at the right moment, and he brought with him the insight of a tactician, and the impulse to decisive action of a true warrior. He crowned the low summit with some three-pounder guns which were pointed and fired with murderous effect; he ordered up to the rescue all available combatants, both horse and foot; and he rallied what remained of the Guards, who had plenty of fight still left in them. The rearward movement was arrested, and the battle was re-kindled. Towards four o'clock in the afternoon the Americans had had more than enough; and Greene withdrew his army from the field of action, leaving all his four cannon in the possession of his enemy. At the end of an hour he made a protracted halt in order to give time for stragglers to rejoin him; and then he marched away to one of his old camping-

[1] *Serjeant Lamb's Journal of Occurrences during the late American War;* chapter 16.

places, six leagues by the map from Guildford Court House. He retreated in good order, and completely unmolested. Tarleton's mounted Legionaries followed him for some miles at a respectful distance; but his rear was protected by Washington's dragoons, whom no cavalry south of the Potomac any longer cared to face.

Nathanael Greene, who was not good at excuses, reported to the President of Congress that the success of the British arms was due to the superiority of British discipline. The battle produced a deep and ineffaceable impression upon the mind of America. It is emphatically stated in General Washington's official biography that no event in the course of the war had reflected more honour on the courage of the Royal troops, because on no other occasion had they contended against such disadvantages of numbers and locality; and, three generations afterwards, Cornwallis and his soldiers received the highest compliment which an American historian who had lived through the War of Secession could pay, in the shape of a remark that their fighting at Guildford Court House was worthy to be compared to that of General Thomas and his men at Chickamauga.[1]

But all this valour was spent in vain. When the firing ceased on the fifteenth of March the weather broke, and rain fell in torrents. The night was unusually dark. Few were those who could be spared from the sorely diminished ranks of the British army to search the ground over which the battle had raged; and the wounded lay, wherever they had fallen, scattered abroad in the recesses of the woods. Near fifty of them died before morning; and, when the survivors were discovered and gathered in, there were no proper comforts or restoratives to give them. The army had tasted nothing for the space of eight-and-forty hours; and, at the end of that time, a quarter of a pound of flour, and the same weight of lean beef, was all that could be served out to each man, whether sick or whole. The

[1] *Annual Register for 1781. Marshall's Life of Washington;* Volume IV, chapter 7. *Fiske's History;* chapter 15.

British had for some time past been reduced to a state of destitution which their success in battle did not remove, or even mitigate. Their nearest magazine of victuals was situated two hundred miles away at Wilmington, on the sea-coast of North Carolina; and their march across country in pursuit of Greene had carried them to a still greater distance from their original base of supply at Charleston. Lord Cornwallis was in no better plight than the commander of a blockaded garrison. His foragers could not venture forth outside his line of sentries. No provisions came safely through by road, and none by river. Greene's cavalry ranged unresisted over the whole neighbourhood; and the North Carolinian Whigs, however poor was the figure which they made in a pitched battle, had taken very kindly to the trade of guerillas. The position was hopeless; and the British general, before it was altogether too late, fell back upon a plan which was nothing more nor less than a counsel of despair. He placed the greater part of his wounded people on a long train of carts; he left behind him seventy of the worst cases with a flag of truce, and a letter commending them to the humanity of the American general; and then he broke up his camp, and retreated with all the speed in his power towards the south-eastern quarter, in the direction of the Atlantic Ocean. On the seventh of April he reached the town and port of Wilmington, at a distance of nineteen days' march from the theatre of his recent victory. On arriving at his destination Cornwallis reported to Sir Henry Clinton that he had failed in North Carolina because "material assistance" was not forthcoming on the part of the local population; and on the same day he sent a very frank account of his proceedings to General Phillips, the trusted adviser to whom he was in the habit of telling anything, and everything. "The idea," he wrote, "of our friends rising in numbers, and to any purpose, totally failed. * * * I assure you that I am quite tired of marching about the country in quest of adventures."

If the English people had depended exclusively upon information dealt out to them by their own Government they would have known very little about what was passing in the Southern States of America. The solitary notice of Tarleton's defeat at The Cowpens which appeared in one of the leading Ministerial newspapers was an observation to the effect that anybody, who was acquainted with the badness of American roads in winter, might rest assured that tidings of the battle could not have arrived at New York within the time alleged by the author of the rumour. On the eighth of May 1781 it was announced that, shortly before twelve o'clock on the previous night, an officer had arrived at Lord George Germaine's house in Pall Mall with letters from Sir Henry Clinton; that Lord Cornwallis, in a most serious engagement, had taken and destroyed the whole of General Greene's army; and that "the Southern provinces were now entirely left at the mercy of the conqueror." The bearer of these despatches, (it was remarked,) might entertain the pleasing reflection that he had been entrusted with "the most consequential packet which had reached the hands of the Government since the accession of the present Sovereign." Opposition journals, in more sober language, warned their readers not to expect too much from a battle in which the beaten party had retired only eighteen miles from the field of action, while the victor never halted until he had retreated more than ten times that distance; and what the public at large thought about the veritable meaning of the military situation was sufficiently indicated by the Three Per Cents, which the news from North Carolina brought down to the almost unprecedentedly low point of 57.

Nathanael Greene forthwith started in pursuit of the British, and followed in their track over the space of fifty miles. Then, having seen Cornwallis, (so to speak,) off the premises, he halted, and made his preparations for an instant return to South Carolina. Among many letters and messages, which he despatched to various

quarters, he gave special orders that he might find ready at Hillsborough twenty hogsheads of rum for the use of the army. Without a supply of spirits (he wrote,) the men could not support the fatigue of a campaign. Whether that was the case or not, Greene's soldiers had fully earned every indulgence which he could procure for them. They had taken part in an historic exploit, at the cost of immense suffering which they had borne with almost unexampled endurance; and it was no holiday work that now lay before them. Their general, who always sought their comfort when circumstances permitted, planned the stages of their journey south so that they might never be over-driven, and carefully arranged that they should be supplied with provisions all along the line of march for at least one day in advance, and sometimes for three or four. Whatever labours and trials might await them when they reached their destination, he was determined to bring them on to the ground in good health and spirits. Nathanael Greene, with much reason, now felt a touch of that self-satisfaction which in him was never an obtrusive quality. He had lost a battle, but he had gained the object for which that battle was fought; and in the conduct of a long, and most important and decisive, series of operations he had established on a firm base his reputation as a strategist. He had outgeneralled the very best general whom King George had sent to America, — the best, indeed, that there was to send. He had relieved South Carolina from the presence of Lord Cornwallis and his army as effectually as if they had been destroyed in battle, or had laid down their arms under the terms of a capitulation; and, with a lighter heart than he had known for many months past, he set forth on his journey back to the performance of what was still a difficult, though no longer an all but impossible, task.[1]

[1] On the very evening of the battle, as he marched away from Guildford Court House, Greene was already possessed by a conviction that he had crippled his adversary. Three days afterwards he wrote thus to President Reed of Pennsylvania: "I have never felt an easy moment, since the

Eighteen months had still to run of those two years during which General Greene, in all practical respects, was the dictator of the Carolinas, with Colonel William Washington for his Master of the Horse. His authority over those provinces was analogous to that exercised over the Netherlands by the Duke of Alva for thrice that space of time; and the complete success of the New Englander, as contrasted with the utter and irremediable failure of the terrible Spaniard, affords a striking proof of the value appertaining in war, as in peace, to the homely attributes of humanity, probity, and civic virtue. Nathanael Greene, though Cornwallis was no longer a lion in his path, found very serious obstacles to encounter. The British generals who were opposed to him possessed a secure place of arms, and a convenient doorway for the import of commissariat and ordnance stores, in the city and harbour of Charleston; and Charleston, in British hands, was nothing short of impregnable. The place could not be invested and blockaded so long as the command of the sea remained with the Royal fleet; an attempt at escalade would have been sheer madness; and a successful bombardment was altogether out of the question. For every mortar, or eighteen-pounder cannon, which the Americans could drag over the six or seven hundred miles of bad roads, or no road, between Charleston and Philadelphia the commandant of the English garrison might, in the course of a single working day, withdraw a dozen, or a score, of great guns from the war-ships anchored in the port, and mount them on his ramparts along the threatened front. Charleston was a fastness whence King George's army might choose its own time to sally forth upon an expedition into the interior of the country, or might take sanctuary after a disaster; and that army was still very far indeed from being despicable either in

enemy crossed the Catawba, until the defeat of the Fifteenth. But now I am perfectly easy, persuaded it is out of the enemy's powers to do us any great injury. Indeed, I think they will retire as soon as they can get off their wounded."

numbers or efficiency. Cornwallis had left behind him the somewhat slender remains of several fine battalions which had fought with credit in almost every action of the war. Early in June 1781 there arrived straight from England reinforcements of superb quality, not much fewer by count of heads than all Greene's Continental troops together; and a fair supply of likely recruits from among the provincial Loyalists were attracted into the Royal ranks by the high and certain pay, and were promptly converted into good soldiers "under that better system of discipline which goes necessarily with an army of long standing and great traditions."[1] This excellent infantry was worthily commanded by Lord Rawdon, a hero of Bunker's Hill, who was of the same happy age as Colonel Tarleton, and greatly his superior in moral and intellectual calibre. The memory of Lord Rawdon's very real services in South Carolina has been overshadowed by the conquests which, far on in the next century, he achieved as Governor General of India under his later and successive titles of Earl of Moira, and Marquis of Hastings.

It was a heavy and uphill bout of work; and among General Washington's available lieutenants Nathanael Greene was the most competent to undertake it. He had a clear conception of the form of war which he intended to wage. Warned by the fatal consequences of General Lincoln's surrender he was determined, before everything else, to keep the American standard planted, secure and erect, as a centre of resistance to the Royal authority. Charleston was a British stronghold; but the leaders of the Republican bands, all the Carolinas over, regarded the camp of the American Commander-in-Chief as a citadel where they might seek refuge in case of defeat, and from which they might borrow additional strength when they were meditating an important and hopeful enterprise. They traversed the country with almost invariable success, and

[1] *Fortescue's History of the British Army;* Book XI, chapter 20.

constant impunity, — storming British military posts, levying requisitions on Loyalist districts, and breaking up, with no light hand, the armed assemblages of Loyalist partisans. Most of them warmly appreciated Greene's straightforward and unselfish character, and were moved to something like affection by his genial and unpretentious bearing. He had his difficulties with Colonel Sumter, who never brooked a superior; but Marion from the very first set a high value upon his advice, and ended by serving under his immediate command as a brigadier general. Greene was several generations ahead of his time in his management of the novel, and very peculiar, operations which it was his duty to undertake, and he displayed a marked originality in the use which he made of cavalry. The Legislatures and the Governors of the horse-breeding States knew that they never could please him so much as by sending him a long string of horses. The Assembly of North Carolina voted him a large draft of militia, and two hundred horses; and Governor Nelson of Virginia promised him two thousand militiamen, and three hundred remounts for his cavalry. Greene joyously accepted the animals, but respectfully suggested that the men would be more useful if they were enrolled as recruits in the Continental army. His mounted people, regular and irregular, pervaded South Carolina in such numbers that the British cavalry were powerless to resist them; and that circumstance was all the more serious because Lord Rawdon did not venture to detach any infantry battalions for temporary service in a distant quarter until General Greene's main army had been beaten to the point of ceasing to be dangerous.[1]

Greene was beaten, and beaten often. He never won a battle; but he always obtained the whole, and some-

[1] "The glory of the day," (so Colonel Stewart reported after the battle of Eutaw Springs,) "would have been complete had not the want of cavalry prevented me from taking the advantage which the gallantry of my infantry threw in my way." That is a specimen of the complaint which then formed the burden of most of the British despatches.

thing more, of the advantages which he had promised himself when he made up his mind to fight. It may fairly be said that in this respect his record is unique among generals. Guildford Court House was only the first, and perhaps not even the most important, in his long series of profitable reverses. In April 1781 the American army was back again in South Carolina. Greene at once proceeded to invest the town of Camden, which was surrounded by a stockade, and encircled by a chain of strong redoubts: but Lord Rawdon hastened to the relief of the place, and attacked the besiegers with amazing dash and vigour. The loss of men on both sides was heavy; and Greene's cannon were in such imminent peril that he thought it necessary to set an example by dismounting from his horse, and hauling at the rope which an artilleryman had dropped. He was defeated, to his surprise and immense disappointment; but nevertheless, after a fortnight had passed, his troops entered the streets of Camden in triumph. On the twenty-second of May he sat down before Fort Ninety Six, the key to the western region of South Carolina, which was occupied by a brave and devoted Tory garrison. The attack was too powerful for the defence; and towards the end of June success was at last in near and certain prospect when the news arrived that Lord Rawdon, strengthened by three fresh regiments from England, was hurrying up by forced marches. Greene, as a last hope, attempted a premature assault by storm, and was repulsed with slaughter. Thereupon he broke up the siege, and retreated, bag and baggage, pursued by the British army as long as their provisions held out. There the matter ended, and the usual consequences followed in their inevitable order. Lord Rawdon's soldiers, heavily burdened, and in thick woollen uniforms, had marched two hundred and forty miles in twelve days through the furnace of a South Carolinian midsummer. Fifty of them had already been killed outright by the heat; their general could not afford to tarry in a hostile dis-

trict, remote from the sea; and he had no troops to spare for the reinforcement of the valiant garrison. Fort Ninety Six was abandoned, and left vacant for General Greene whenever he might choose to occupy it; while the Royal army retraced its steps to Charleston, attended by a train of waggons packed with the families, and the household goods, of the up-country Loyalists. Victims of a doomed and derelict policy, they were condemned thenceforward to lead the wearisome existence of a rural population planted down as idle, impoverished, and not very welcome guests inside the walls of a beleaguered city.[1]

Lord Rawdon's health gave way beneath the strain of that exhausting and unavailing effort. He sailed for England, sick; and on his voyage home he was intercepted, and carried into Brest, by a French cruiser. The command in the Carolinas devolved upon Lieutenant Colonel Stewart of the Third Buffs, the fighting chief of a fighting regiment. On the eighth of September 1781 Royalists and Republicans once again met in stubborn conflict. The contending armies were both of a size, although Stewart reported in his despatch that the Americans had double his numbers. At Guildford Court House, where they were two to one, Cornwallis had pictured them to himself as seven to one; and in each of the two cases it was a high compliment to American valour, where no compliment was intended.[2] Stewart had planted his troops in a well-selected position at Eutaw Springs, about fifty miles due north of Charleston. Greene went to seek him, and surprised a number of his foragers digging potatoes with no suspicion that an enemy was in the neighbourhood. There arose a boisterous and furiously contested battle, which

[1] "Crowding together," (said General Greene's biographer,) "into a miserable suburb of Charleston, — to which derision, or a still deeper feeling, gave the name of Rawdon's Town, — they languished there in wretched hovels." It was the story over again of the unfortunate Athenian farmers, as told more than two thousand years before by Thucydides in his History of the Peloponnesian War, and by Aristophanes in his immortal comedies.

[2] Cornwallis to Phillips; April 10, 1781.

was full of surprises. The local militia in Greene's army, under the impulse and inspiration of their countryman, the gallant Marion, stood firm until they had discharged seventeen rounds at point-blank range; and seventeen rounds took American farmers a long time to fire. Each of the two sides borrowed the habitual tactics of the other. The Royal sharpshooters picked off thirty or forty American captains and lieutenants; while the Marylanders and Virginians of the Continental Line broke through the hostile centre by a headlong charge with the bayonet, and would have won the battle straight off if they had not chanced to light upon a store of British rum-barrels. Greene lost a quarter of his people; and some of his very best officers paid with their persons. Colonel Campbell of King's Mountain was shot through the breast, and died before the day was over; and Colonel Washington was unhorsed and captured. Out of two thousand British close upon seven hundred were killed, wounded, or taken prisoners. The Buffs, who in the course of their long history never shirked hard knocks, suffered more severely than in any battle between Malplaquet and Albuera.[1] When night fell Stewart was still in possession of the disputed ground, but it was Greene who reaped the fruits of victory; for many hours had not elapsed before the British commenced their retreat towards the sea-coast. From that time onward the Royal army sheltered itself behind fortified lines, and desisted from active operations in the open field. George Washington, who judged success and failure by their consequences, and who was more jealous for a friend's fame than that friend himself, claimed Eutaw Springs as a gained battle. He felicitated the President of Congress on the event, "with very sincere pleasure;" and he wished Nathanael Greene joy in the precise and stilted, but

[1] Among the severely wounded at Eutaw Springs was Lord Edward Fitzgerald, a bright and singularly attractive lad of eighteen, who still had half his life to live before he became involved in the tragedy which ended in Dublin jail.

heart-felt, language of old-fashioned cordiality. "How happy am I," (he wrote to Greene,) "in at length having it in my power to congratulate you upon a victory as splendid as I hope it will prove important! Fortune must have been coy indeed had she not yielded at last to so persevering a pursuer. I hope, now she is yours, she will change her appellation of 'fickle' to that of 'constant.'" As a matter of fact Greene had little more to ask from Fortune, for the neck of his task was broken. Both the Carolinas, outside the ramparts of Charleston and Wilmington, were already irrecoverably lost to the British Crown.

Nathanael Greene, while he was securing these great and decisive results, had depended mainly on his own resources, and had taken all his measures entirely on his own responsibility. So far as any combined action between the Northern and Southern armies was concerned they might just as well have been operating in two different hemispheres. The intervening spaces were so enormous, and the obstacles to free and rapid communication so formidable, that the news of victory or defeat did not arrive at Washington's head-quarters in New Jersey until three or four weeks after a battle had been fought in South Carolina; and Washington's letters of advice and criticism, even if he had been unwise enough to write them, would have taken as long, and longer still, to find Greene in one of his shifting bivouacs on the banks of the Santee or the Catawba.[1] Greene's

[1] The news of The Cowpens, which was fought on the 17th January, came to General Heath at West Point on the 13th February. Remote and isolated garrisons in the Southern States, whether British or American, sometimes remained for a quarter of a year together in ignorance of what was being enacted at the seat of war in the North; and the information which reached them had often a mythical flavour about it. During the winter of 1777–8 the royal commandant of Fort Tonyn in Georgia reported to the Governor of the province that intelligence had been brought from Philadelphia by a Quaker "of Washington having met with a total defeat, and his scattered troops reduced to the last extremity; and a counter-report of an attack upon General Howe, who had twelve thousand killed, himself escaping by skating up on the ice." *Report on American Manuscripts in the Royal Institution of Great Britain;* Volume I, page 22.

handful of Continental troops had performed wonders, and had established a claim on his gratitude which he warmly recognised. Between April 1780, and April 1781, they had marched above two thousand six hundred miles, besides being engaged in many skirmishes, and two pitched battles. They had passed through, or over, a score of streams, many of which, (as Colonel Tarleton truly said,) would have been reckoned large rivers in any other country in the world. Shoeless and in rags, and laden with their heavy fire-locks, they plodded through the wilderness for month after month of a never-ending campaign without showing any perceptible diminution in their martial ardour. After a lost battle, — which was a familiar experience to them, — they almost instantaneously recovered their self-confidence, and their self-complacency, with the invaluable elasticity of the American soldier. On the day after Guildford Court House Greene wrote to Sumter that the army was in the highest spirits, and wishing for another opportunity to meet the enemy. "You will see next time," said the Second Marylanders, on an occasion when they had not come up to what their general expected of them. At Eutaw Springs many of the Continental infantry, the cloth of whose coats had long ago rotted off them in fragments, "fought with pieces of moss tied on the shoulder and flank to keep the musket and cartridge-box from galling." They sometimes got nothing for ten or twelve days running except half a pound of flour, and a morsel of beef "so miserably poor that scarce any mortal could make use of it," and were fain to live upon green corn, and unripe apples and peaches. During the pursuit of Cornwallis, after Guildford Court House, many of them fainted on the road from lack of food.[1] When the army was on short

[1] *The Private Soldier under Washington, by Charles Knowles Bolton;* page 195. *Colonel Tarleton's History of the Campaign;* Notes to the Fifth Chapter. *Journal of the Southern Expedition* for December 1780. *The Administration of the American Revolutionary Army, by Louis Clinton Hatch;* chapter 6. The sufferings of the wounded were depicted by

commons General Greene, for all that he had retained his blacksmith's appetite, was contented to share the ration of his men. He had one full meal in the course of his famous retreat. On the second of February 1781 he alighted at the door of Mrs. Steele's tavern in the town of Salisbury, where he encountered a friend who asked him with surprise whether he was unguarded and alone. "Yes," answered the general, "tired, hungry, alone, and penniless." His words were overheard by the people of the house. An abundant breakfast was placed before him; and his landlady stole into the room, cautiously shut the door behind her, and held out her hands towards him with a little bag of hard money in each. "Take these," she said, "for you need them, and I can do without them." A portrait of King George was hanging over the chimney-piece. Greene turned the picture face to the wall, and wrote on the back of it with his pencil an inscription, the reverse of flattering, which still was legible after the lapse of a century.

The mutual exasperation of contending factions had by this time reduced the Southern provinces to a condition which aroused pity and horror even in minds which were not prone to maudlin sentiment. "Nothing but blood and slaughter," said Colonel Tarleton, "has prevailed among the Whigs and Tories; and their inveteracy against each other must, if it continues, depopulate the country." Nathanael Greene, — who held that the conscience of the nation, and the honour of the army, had been committed to his charge, — was shocked and saddened by the lawless ferocity which overspread the land. By July 1781 the first stress of the war was over; and, as soon as his prolonged wanderings had ceased, and his camp had become a fixture in the vicinity of the town of Charleston, he lost no time in dealing strenuously and sternly with the crimes of violence and rapine. He addressed a letter to General Pickens, a brave and efficient officer, as well as a

Greene himself in an official letter to the President of Congress, with particulars of their misery too dreadful to be transcribed.

high-minded and worthy man. "I am exceedingly distressed," wrote Greene, "that the practice of plundering still continues to rage. * * * The poor inhabitants tremble the moment a party of men appears in sight. I beg you to take every possible step in your power to bring offenders to justice. Let those who are capitally concerned be sent prisoners to this camp for trial, for I am determined to subject them to martial law if there is no other measure by which the evil can be remedied."

The suppression of marauding was a matter which General Greene had in his own hands as a detail of military discipline; but he could not exercise the same control over the sporadic atrocities perpetrated by adherents of both parties throughout a vast extent of wild and half-settled territory. He did his best, however, to discourage the excesses of revenge by precept and example. In June 1782 Anthony Wayne, acting as Greene's lieutenant, won Georgia for the Republic by a fierce stroke of fighting.[1] Wayne's opponent was that same Colonel Thomas Browne who had hanged a number of the American wounded at Augusta, and who on another occasion half-hung five captives, and then handed them over to his Indian allies to be scalped. But even in this case Greene would not hear of reprisals. "Try by every means in your power," (so his instructions to General Wayne were worded,) "to soften the malignity, and dreadful resentment, subsisting between Whig and Tory; and put a stop, as much as possible, to that cruel custom of putting men to death after they surrender themselves as prisoners." A sane-minded and law-abiding New Englander, Greene never missed an opportunity of evincing his repugnance to the odious institution of the political Vendetta.

General Greene, in his homely way, was a statesman as well as a soldier. He disliked martial law, and dis-

[1] In this Georgian war even Anthony Wayne got his fill of personal danger. "Such," he said, "was the determined bravery with which the Indians fought that, after I had cut down one of their chiefs, with his last breath he drew his trigger, and shot my noble horse dead under me."

trusted the administrative efficacy of government by the sword. "I am not fit," he once said, "for a military life; for I cannot adopt its maxims." John Rutledge was a lawyer of considerable ability, and genuine public spirit, who had studied in the Temple in London, and who subsequently became a Judge in the Supreme Court of the United States. He enjoyed the confidence of his fellow-countrymen, and had been elected Governor of South Carolina as far back as January 1779. When the cause of national independence was to all appearance extinguished throughout the State by the capture of Charleston, and the defeat of General Gates at Camden, Rutledge led a precarious and most comfortless existence, sometimes in hiding, and sometimes a vagrant exile beyond the South Carolinian boundary. He continued, nevertheless, to regard himself as "clothed with full power to keep alive in his own person, — and ultimately, if possible, to restore, — the State government." His fiery, but carefully reasoned, manifestoes, distributed broadcast to farm, and town, and village, sustained a clear flame of Republican sentiment throughout the province; and by an extremely judicious, and singularly bold, stretch of personal authority he took upon himself to confer the rank of Brigadier General upon Pickens, and Marion, and Sumter. In July 1781 Greene invited Rutledge to visit his camp on the High Hills, east of the Santee River, and there resume his official functions as Governor of the State. Rutledge's earliest act in that character was the issue of a proclamation denouncing plunder and outrage; calling on all civil officers to administer and enforce the law; and authorising them, in case of need, and in case of need only, to invoke the assistance of the military arm. Some months afterwards he sent out writs for the election of a Senate, and a House of Representatives, under the terms of the existing constitution; and, on the eighteenth of January 1782, the Assembly met for despatch of business at the town of Jacksonborough, situated twenty miles to the west of Charleston on the

Edisto river. Decent and honest men of both parties experienced a profound sense of relief when a settled and stable government, — acting in the name, and for the interests, of the community at large, — emerged from amidst the chaos of anarchy. The General and the Governor between them had discovered the true method of reconquering South Carolina.

General Greene's personal history affords a striking illustration of Wordsworth's "Character of the Happy Warrior," — that unique fragment of verse which the author, in a spirit of just self-criticism, pronounced to be not so much a poem as a chain of valuable thoughts.

> "It is the generous spirit, who, when brought
> Among the tasks of real life, hath wrought
> Upon the plan that pleased his childish thought.
> Who, with a natural instinct to discern
> What knowledge can perform, is diligent to learn.
>
> * * * * * *
>
> Who, doomed to go in company with Pain,
> And Fear, and Bloodshed, miserable train!
> Turns his necessity to glorious gain;
> Controls them, and subdues, transmutes, bereaves
> Of their bad influence, and their good receives.
>
> * * * * * *
>
> He who, though thus endued as with a sense
> And faculty for storm and turbulence,
> Is yet a soul whose master-bias leans
> To home-felt pleasures, and to gentle scenes."

That was Nathanael Greene all over. Martial glory had been the day-dream of his boyhood; and, when he came to man's estate, he had studied the profession of arms as the most fascinating, but, (as it then seemed,) the most unattainable of callings. As an officer in chief command he used every exertion to alleviate the miseries, and repress the barbarities, of war; and, as he grew older, — and men age fast on active service, — he longed to find himself once again in the tranquil haven of family life. "You think," he said to a friend, "that I am fond of an army, and a busy scene. You mistake

my feelings. I am truly domestic." When the era of battles and slaughter seemed drawing to a close he indulged himself in a foretaste of that happiness which he fondly hoped would henceforward be in store for him. His best friend was at much pains to send him the most acceptable of all gifts. "Mrs. Greene," wrote George Washington from Philadelphia, "is now in this city on her way to South Carolina. She is in perfect health, and good spirits, and thinking no difficulty too great to be encountered in the performance of this visit. It shall be my endeavour to strew the way over with flowers."[1] She rejoined her husband in March 1782, bringing gladness with her. The camp in the neighbourhood of Charleston, though more secure, was not much more luxurious than Valley Forge; but, after so protracted and anxious a separation, that pair of lifelong lovers were not difficult to please. The wife was a good horsewoman, and Greene had a fine stud from which she might pick and choose. Still a pretty woman, she presided over the Spartan hospitalities of her general's table with never-failing graciousness, and voluble good humour. The foreign officers, whose language she fearlessly talked with the accent of a Colonial boarding-school, spoke of her among themselves as the French Lady. "She is a great favourite," wrote Greene, "even with the ladies, and has almost rivalled me where I least expected it. Her flowing tongue, and cheerful countenance, quite triumph over my grave face. I bear it with great philosophy, as I gain on one hand what I lose on the other."

The termination of hostilities was eagerly expected at Charleston by besieged and besiegers alike, for it was a trying and dreary time on both sides of the parapet. Nothing in warfare is ever so dull as the ditch-water of the last ditch. The Americans were insufficiently fed,

[1] Washington and Mrs. Greene were always on the best of terms. At Middlebrook, in the spring of 1779, they danced together "upwards of three hours without sitting down." *Martha Washington, by Anne Hollingworth Wharton;* page 129.

and worse than badly clothed. That utter destitution of mechanical resources, and manufacturing enterprise, in the slave-supported community of the Southern States, which long afterwards proved so fatal to Jefferson Davis and his cause, did much to aggravate the sufferings of Nathanael Greene's army.[1] "For upwards of two months," said the General, "more than two thirds of our men were entirely naked, with nothing but a breech-cloth about them, and never came out of their tents; and the rest were as ragged as wolves. Our beef was perfect carrion." At last the season of tension ran out, and the British government began to withdraw its garrisons. In July 1782 Savannah was abandoned, and later on in the year preparations were made for the evacuation of Charleston itself. The fourteenth of December was a gala day for the Republic. Before eleven in the morning the regiments which composed the garrison marched down to the water-side attended, more closely than the royal officers thought either necessary or complimentary, by Anthony Wayne at the head of four hundred of his picked Continental veterans. "Out in the harbour three hundred vessels lay at their anchors, swaying to and fro with the tide." The fleet was victualled for a voyage to the West Indies; and room had been found on board for a great number of Loyalist families, who carried with them nearly six thousand negroes, as well as their other portable goods and chattels. At three in the afternoon Greene entered the town on horseback, escorting the Governor and his Council in a procession which the General had arranged with the express design of marking the subordination of the military to the civil authority. The streets were crowded with Carolinians who had flocked in, from many miles round, to re-visit the pleasant little capital

[1] Before the Revolutionary War the smallest and commonest manufactured articles for use in the Southern States were brought from England. Soon after the Peace a Carolinian gentleman ordered a gate on his plantation to be repaired. His negro carpenter, who had Royalist sympathies, reported that there were no British hinges remaining in the store. "But, Massa," he said, "I can make you a rebel hinge."

city, embowered in semi-tropical vegetation, which was the ornament and pride of their province. Wreaths showered from the windows; and the Southern maidens, great and small, were much in evidence. Charleston ladies, unlike the daughters of Philadelphia at the time of the Meschianza, had shown themselves stiff and unapproachable throughout the whole of the British occupation; and they now had a hearty welcome ready for the champions of national independence. Mrs. Greene celebrated the occasion by a dance, in a ball-room decorated by Colonel Kosciusko "with magnolia leaves hung in festoons, and pieces of paper curiously cut in imitation of the flowers." That was Kosciusko's last handiwork as Chief Engineer of General Greene's army. When the war was over he returned to Poland, and embarked ere long upon his career of heroic effort, and tragical disaster, with the eyes of the whole civilised world intent upon him.

In August 1783, after the news of the Peace with Great Britain had reached America, Greene set forth from Charleston upon his homeward journey. He was surrounded at every stage of his progress north by the respect and admiration of his countrymen. Congress, which then was sitting at Princeton in New Jersey, received him with all the honours, and voted him "two pieces of the field-ordnance taken at The Cowpens, Augusta, or Eutaw," with a suitable inscription engraved on the gun metal.[1] At Philadelphia he was greeted like a conqueror, and in his native Rhode Island like a son returning to his paternal roof-tree after a long and eventful absence. He had still much that was disagreeable in front of him, for immense arrears of public and private business awaited his attention. During full two years to come he was sorely harassed, and constantly over-worked, and it was not until the autumn of 1785 that he could seek the repose, and the change of thought, which his state of health imperatively de-

[1] As a matter of history, Greene had captured one cannon at Eutaw Springs, and had lost two.

manded. Then he sailed on a voyage towards milder skies, and a less troubled existence, and took up his abode in the vicinity of Savannah, on an estate which had been granted to him, in testimony of public gratitude, by the Legislature of Georgia. There he spent a quiet winter with his wife, and with his children, to whom he was the perfection of a father. All the fun and freshness of his youth, (we are told,) came back to him in their company. In the following April he drew a pleasant picture of a Southern springtide for the contemplation of his familiar circle at Newport in Rhode Island. "The garden," he wrote, "is delightful. The fruit-trees, and flowering shrubs, form a pleasing variety. We have green peas almost fit to eat. The mocking-birds surround us even in a morning. * * * We have in the same orchard apples, pears, peaches, apricots, nectarines, plums of different kinds, figs, pomegranates, and oranges. And we have strawberries which measure three inches round. All these," (he went on to say, in good American,) "are clever; but the want of our friends to enjoy them with us renders them less interesting." And then the end came, and his hard-earned holiday, in this world at least, was over. In the hottest hours of Tuesday, the twelfth of June, he paid a visit of inspection to a neighbour's rice-field. His head began to ache, and the pain soon became intense. The physicians at first took the matter lightly; but their patient grew rapidly worse, and they pronounced him to be suffering under a severe attack of sun-stroke, against which all their remedies proved to be powerless. Anthony Wayne was among the watchers at the bedside; but Greene was altogether unconscious of that friendly and congenial presence. On the Friday he sank into a stupor from which he never again awoke, and on the Monday he died. He was only forty-four years old; but he had lived his life, and had fulfilled his ideal, and he will always be remembered as the very type and model of a citizen-soldier.

The melancholy tidings reached Mount Vernon in a

letter from Colonel Harry Lee, who had withdrawn from the army, and was already a Member of Congress at Philadelphia. "Your friend and second," he wrote to Washington, "the patriot and noble Greene, is no more. Universal grief reigns here. How hard is the fate of the United States to lose such a man in the middle of life! But he is gone, and I am incapable to say more." Washington's correspondence, from that time forward, contained many allusions, sometimes to his undying regret, and sometimes to the envy with which he regarded a brave soldier who had been snatched by destiny from the sordid and turbulent arena of politics. The depth of his feeling was shown by his behaviour towards the wife whom his dead comrade had left behind him. Washington remained her constant and devoted friend in private life; and, as President of the United States, he treated her in public with the conventional marks of deference and respect which, in those formal and ceremonious days, were reserved for ladies of the most exalted rank. Greene was an imposing figure in the sight of his contemporaries; and yet he never misunderstood, or over-rated, the exact nature and strength of his own title to military fame. There is true self-knowledge in a letter which he addressed to an intimate acquaintance in one of his lighter hours. "Our army," (so he wrote,) "has been frequently beaten, and, like the stock-fish, grows the better for it. I had a letter some time since from Mr. John Turnbull, wherein he asserts that, with all my talents for war, I am deficient in the great art of making a timely retreat. I hope I have convinced the world to the contrary, for there are few generals that have run oftener, or more lustily, than I have done; but I have taken care not to run too far, and commonly have run as fast forward as backward, to convince our enemy that we were like a crab that could run either way." The three greatest names among the founders of the Republic were, beyond all question, those of Washington, Franklin, and John Adams. Nathaniel Greene, like Benaiah the son

of Jehoiada, did not attain unto the first three; but he ranks next below the very highest in the value of the services which he rendered to the American Revolution.[1]

[1] There is an interesting passage about Nathanael Greene in *The History of the British Army* by Mr. John Fortescue, who, from the nature and scope of his task, and from his trained power of judgment, is singularly qualified to form a true estimate of a general's relative rank among generals. "Greene's reputation," writes Mr. Fortescue, "stands firmly on his campaign in the Carolinas, his luring Cornwallis into a false position, and his prompt return upon Camden after the retreat of Cornwallis to Wilmington. His keen insight into the heart of Cornwallis's blunders, and his skilful use of his guerilla troops, are the most notable features of his work, and stamp him as a general of patience, resolution, and profound common sense, — qualities which go far towards making a great commander. One gift he seems to have lacked, namely the faculty of leadership, to which, as well as to his bad luck, must be ascribed the fact that he was never victorious in a general action. * * * Failing this one small matter Greene, who was a very noble character, seems to me to stand little, if at all, lower than Washington as a general in the field."

CHAPTER XVII

PARLIAMENT AND THE PEOPLE. ENGLAND AND AMERICA.

HARSH things have been said about the eighteenth century, and more especially in the opening pages of Mr. Carlyle's last and largest history, — pages familiar to many readers who are too faint-hearted to penetrate much deeper into that row of noble volumes.[1] And yet the third quarter of that century, so far as our island is concerned, was a period exceptionally rich in the most characteristic products of the national intellect. Art, science, and literature, humanitarian effort, mechanical research and discovery, and the philosophical treatment of commercial and social problems, were all of them alike inspired by good sense and sanity, by a broad sympathy with the best thought and feeling of the age, and by a clear perception of what conduced to the welfare of mankind. That was the period when Granville Sharp and Lord Mansfield dealt a mortal blow to slavery in England, and when John Howard gave his famous evidence before the House of Commons, and published his "State of the Prisons in England and Wales." Then it was that Blackstone's Commentaries on the Laws of England were written, and Adam Smith's Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations. Brindley, and Watt, and Arkwright were in the full tide of creative energy. John Hunter, in his thronged lecture-room, was imparting to the world the fruits of his studies in anatomy.[2] Johnson, and Burke, and Gibbon, and Cowper, — Flaxman and Wedgwood, — Reynolds,

[1] *History of Frederic the Great;* Book I, chapter 1.

[2] Gibbon, in a busy session of parliament, and during his active preparations for a second instalment of his History, was a diligent hearer of the great surgeon. "The usual distractions," (he wrote in March 1777,) "of the winter have been increased by a constant and daily attendance of two hours every day at Dr. Hunter's Anatomy Lectures, which have opened to me a new, and very entertaining, scene within myself."

Gainsborough, and Romney, — were all of them engaged upon work which people of their own day could appreciate and enjoy, and which has borne the test of time. Then, too, lived the greatest English master in a province of art which, from its ephemeral and transitory nature, eludes the judgment of posterity. "I have often reflected," said Arthur Young, "on the principal personages who figured in England during this age; and I am disposed to think that Garrick was by far the greatest. That is to say, he excelled all his contemporaries in the art which he professed." Such was the opinion of one whose own talents and acquirements reflected honour upon his country, and who spoke from intimate personal acquaintance with the most celebrated men of his time.

The fame of English genius, and the influence of English thought, extended far beyond the confines of our island. The literary society of France, — which before and since that epoch has been so intensely national, and so proudly self-sufficing, — in the reign of Louis the Sixteenth was much in the habit of looking across the British Channel for inspiration and instruction. All highly educated Frenchmen, with rare exceptions, read our books, made a valiant attempt to speak our language, and hailed the triumphs of our science, both practical and theoretic, with interest that frequently rose to positive enthusiasm.[1] And yet the attitude which the most serious-minded, and keen-

[1] Mr. Buckle, in his Twelfth Chapter, enumerates a list of no fewer than a hundred and fifty-three Frenchmen of Voltaire's time who read, or at all events who quoted, English. This miraculous draught of proper names covers two entire pages of Mr. Buckle's volume. It is a curious, and perhaps unique, development of the theory that an historian is bound to insert in the text of his book the whole evidence on which his conclusions are based.

Voltaire, while conversing with an American tourist, expressed his feeling towards our country in language of unnecessary vehemence. "The English," he declared, "have some fine authors. They are, I swear by God himself, the first nation in Europe; and, if ever I smell a Resurrection, and come a second time on earth, I will pray God to make me born in England." *The Unpublished Journal of John Morgan of Philadelphia, afterwards Physician in Chief of the American Army.*

sighted, among foreign critics observed towards England was not one of unqualified admiration; for they could not understand how it came about that a nation, which apparently possessed an unlimited supply of sagacious and successful men, numbered so very few of them amongst its rulers. Turgot was not alone in his opinion when he expressed surprise that Englishmen, pre-eminent as they were in all the arts of life, should allow their public affairs to be so detestably administered. The Abbé Morellet, — who loved our country only less, if less, than he loved his own, — told his friend and correspondent, the Earl of Shelburne, that the action taken by Lord North's Cabinet in America was the most melancholy blunder of the century. "Men of sense," he wrote, "in France are beginning to be uneasy about the situation of England; for you must not imagine that we desire your ruin. For my own part, at any rate, I shall regard any diminution of your prosperity and liberty as a misfortune to my nation, and to every nation in Europe." Frederic the Great pronounced it an unpardonable fault in the Government of a mother-country to have brought things to such a pass that she was at war with her own colonies. The British people, in his view, were greatly to be pitied; and the time was not distant when their blind submission to the caprices of their rulers would be recognized as having been fatal to the security of the British State. "I agree with Lord Chatham," he said, "when he attributes the disasters of his country to the ignorance, the temerity, and the incapacity of the Ministers who are now in power."[1]

There were multitudes of Englishmen who discerned the cause of their national calamities not less accurately, and felt them far more keenly, than any foreigner. In the reign of George the Third a deep, and almost in-

[1] The Abbé Morellet to Lord Shelburne, February 18, and August 9, 1777. Frederic of Prussia to the Queen Dowager of Denmark, December 28, 1777; to the Comte de Maltzan, March 4, 1776, and December 22 and 25, 1777.

superable, line of social demarcation was drawn between those who lived on the rent of land, and those who lived by trade and commerce. The middle classes then contained very many people who now would rank themselves among the upper ten, or rather the upper fifty, thousand. Those classes therefore constituted an even larger section of the community than at present; and they were as deserving of respect, and as essential to the prosperity and stability of the commonwealth, as at any period of our national history. They were the true descendants and representatives of the men who, in the course of the last century and a half, had established religious toleration, and personal freedom, at home; had colonised New England; had planted the West Indian Islands, and founded our empire of Hindostan; had equipped Great Britain with markets, and wharves, and warehouses, and mines, and manufactories; had covered the seas with British shipping, and had made London the financial centre of the world. They were an intelligent, an enterprising, a laborious, and, (in their own rather silent and unostentatious fashion,) a most high-spirited people. They had behaved with singular dignity and composure during the black August of 1779, when a French army was daily expected on our shores; but they none the less were bitterly exasperated at seeing the flag of Spain flaunted at the mouth of the very same port from which Howard, and Drake, and Hawkins, and Frobisher had sallied forth to chase and batter the Great Armada. When Admiral d'Orvilliers had retreated into harbour, and the immediate peril of invasion had been averted by the winds which baffled, and the pestilence which ravaged, the hostile fleets, our ancestors were not altogether unthankful to Providence; and yet, whatever they might say in church, they were the sort of people who would have preferred to believe that their own arm had saved them.

The events of that summer and autumn destroyed the last vestige of credit and popularity which adhered to the reputation of the Ministry. It was useless for

their supporters to assert that no better men could be found to manage the affairs of Great Britain. A nation which had been governed, in peace and war, by a Charles Montague, a Somers, a Godolphin, a Walpole, and a Chatham, had not yet been reduced so low as to have no alternative except to remain under the guardianship of Lord North and his associates. Everybody who read the newspapers could run off the names of a list of living statesmen who would have preserved the country from the mishaps and humiliations amidst which it was now weltering. If Rockingham had been Prime Minister, with Camden and Savile in his Cabinet; if Dunning had been in the place of Wedderburn, and Richmond in the place of Germaine; if it had fallen to Lord John Cavendish, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, to deal with the Tea Duty; and if Sir Guy Carleton had been Governor of Massachusetts instead of Sir Francis Bernard, and Lord Cornwallis in command at Boston instead of General Gage, — the British empire in the year 1780 would still have been as united, as opulent, and as formidable as at the Peace of Paris. This line of thought was perfectly familiar to the great mass of hard-headed and hard-working Englishmen who took a close interest in politics, and who knew all the signs which distinguish a genuine statesman from an intriguer, a self-seeker, an idler, and a bungler. The English people, (said Edmund Burke,) was perfectly capable of determining for itself whether public men looked most to their own interest, or to the interests of the nation; whether they acted an uniform, clear, manly part in their respective stations; "and whether the main drift of their councils, for any series of years, was wise or foolish, and whether things went well or ill in their hands."[1] A large, and growing, numerical majority of our people deserved the compliments which Burke paid to their intelligence and their patriotism; and they would speedily have dismissed North and his colleagues

[1] *Edmund Burke to a member of the Bell Club at Bristol;* Beaconsfield, October 31, 1779.

from their service if only they had been lords of their own fate, and masters in their own household.

But that was far from being the case. Then, and for half a century to come, the real people of England had very much less than a due share in the government of their native country. Mr. Thomas Oldfield, a contemporary of Charles Fox, and an historian and antiquary who had made a lifelong study of the practical working of the British constitution, — whose knowledge was immense and to the point, and whose conclusions were formed with an impartiality, and stated with a moderation of language, rarely employed in the department of research towards which his labours were directed, — compiled and published an analysis of the electoral condition of England, Wales, and Scotland. After some years of close and patient investigation Mr. Oldfield committed himself to the statement that ninety-nine peers, a hundred and four commoners, and the Ministers for the time being, returned between them three hundred and eighty-seven members of the House of Commons; while only a hundred and seventy-one were representatives of free and independent communities. The evidence which this gentleman gave in support of his calculation fills two goodly volumes, which are readable from the first page to the last.[1] At this distance of time, — when patrons and nominees alike have long been in their graves, and when nothing is left to remind our great landowners of the political influence exercised by their predecessors in title, except indeed the hereditary burden of the vast mortgages by which that influence was purchased, — it is impossible to form an opinion about the personal relations, and the local circumstances and conditions, upon which Mr. Oldfield's estimate was founded. But there remains on record a multitude of startling facts and figures, which cannot be controverted, and which prove beyond all manner of

[1] *An Entire and Complete History, Political and Personal, of the Boroughs of Great Britain, together with the Cinque Ports.* Second Edition, 1794; two volumes, octavo.

question that popular representation, in the later decades of the eighteenth century, was for the most part nothing better than an illusion and a farce.

More than two hundred members, who considerably exceeded in number a third part of the House of Commons, were returned by towns and villages situated in eight of the English counties. Ten of these gentlemen were elected by five Wiltshire boroughs, with an average of seventy-five voters apiece; eighteen by nine Sussex boroughs, with an average of thirty-six voters; twenty-two by eleven boroughs in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, with an average of forty-six voters; and no fewer than forty-two by twenty-one Cornish boroughs, with an average of forty-four voters. Very many constituencies of the same dimensions, which exercised their so-called franchise with the same implicit submission to the dictates of one or two powerful individuals, were dispersed up and down the island, though they were nowhere so thickly planted as in the Southern counties. Thirsk had fifty electors on the register, and Malton forty, and Droitwich and Bewdley fourteen each. In Corfe Castle there were just over a dozen resident voters; two in Gatton; and in Midhurst, and Old Sarum, none at all between one general election and another. Four members were elected in one parish of Yorkshire by a hundred and sixty cottagers, — or rather by the Duke of Newcastle, whose bailiff acted as Returning Officer. Four others were sent up to Westminster from the conjoint boroughs of Weymouth and Melcombe Regis, after they had been nominated in a batch by a ground-landlord, who likewise was Paymaster of Marines with a salary of six thousand pounds a year. Meanwhile Derbyshire and Leicestershire, pioneer districts in the mining and textile industries of Great Britain, with a combined population exceeding a quarter of a million, had only eight members between them in town and country; and the half million of Yorkshiremen, who lived outside the boundaries of parliamentary boroughs, returned a single pair of representatives to speak and

vote on their behalf in the House of Commons. There was no part of England in which political feeling ran higher than in Northamptonshire, where many scores of thousands of pounds were poured out freely by the leading men of both parties over a contested county election. Yet the Knights of the Shire of Northampton, which contained twelve market-towns and three hundred and thirty parishes, were out-voted in Parliament by the members for a couple of Northamptonshire villages, chosen ostensibly by constituencies of thirty-three and twenty-one voters, but in reality by the Duke of Bridgewater and Earl Fitzwilliam. The County of Norfolk had long been distinguished by an intelligent, and eminently patriotic, interest in the conduct of public affairs. "The nobility," wrote Mr. Oldfield, "reside here in great numbers; but they have not, when united, sufficient power to influence effectually the freeholders in their choice of their own representatives." Nevertheless Norfolk, with its two hundred thousand people, and its army of freeholders who knew their own minds, and obeyed their own conscience, had no louder voice in the great council of the nation than Castle Rising, a decayed hamlet in a corner of the county, which possessed a harbour choked with sand, the memory of a market which had been closed several generations back, a corporation consisting of two Aldermen who elected each other alternately to the post of Mayor and Returning Officer, and two solitary burgesses with the right of voting for two members of parliament who were recommended to their suffrages by two Lords of the Manor in the persons of Lord Petre and the Duke of Grafton.[1]

[1] *Oldfield's History of the Boroughs;* Volume I, page 404. "The Norfolk people were always predominantly Whig. Norfolk was one of the strongholds of the party in the Civil War. Walpole, Townshend, and many other leaders of the Whigs, resided in the county." So Macaulay wrote on the margin of his Life of Doctor Parr; but, in point of fact, the Whiggism of Norfolk was guided by a spirit of enlightened discrimination. When Thomas Coke of Holkham, the most popular commoner in the county, and perhaps in the kingdom, stood as a supporter of the Coalition

Manchester, and Birmingham, and Leeds, and Sheffield did not send representatives to parliament; and the metropolis itself had no member for all the enormous area of shops and dwelling-houses, on both sides of the river, which was not included within the boroughs of Westminster, of Southwark, and of the City of London. But there were plenty of important places in England, whether capitals of counties, or cathedral cities, or sea-ports and seats of manufacture which had been prosperous and populous in the days of the Plantagenets, and were prosperous and populous still; and it might be supposed that the public spirit and independence of the great urban populations would have done much to correct, and out-weigh, the stupid and ignorant servility of the proprietary boroughs. Such, however, was not the case in a considerable number of large or fair-sized towns, where the parliamentary franchise rested, not with the inhabitants in general, but with the members and office-holders of an unreformed municipal corporation, or with an heterogeneous crowd of local paupers, and wealthy non-resident partisans, whom the clique which dominated the town-council had placed upon the roll of freemen. The city of Bath contained about five-and-twenty thousand souls, and exactly thirty-three electors. Portsmouth had just under thirty thousand people, and just over twenty voters. Plymouth had nearly twenty thousand inhabitants; while the two members for Plymouth were chosen by the Aldermen and Common Councilmen, and by a small handful of their relatives and dependents. The townsmen of Cambridge were keen politicians; but a monopoly of political power lay with the Mayor, the Bailiffs, and the freemen "not in receipt of alms," — or at all events not in receipt of alms in any other shape than that of a round sum of money between the dissolution of one parliament, and the meeting of another. The Cambridge undergraduates, at any general election up to the Re-

at the general election of 1784, the disapprobation of his constituents was so deep, and so frankly expressed, that he did not venture to face a poll.

form Act of 1832, enjoyed, and highly appreciated, an opportunity of learning something about the Government of a State which they could not find in their Aristotle or their Plato. The poll was taken, rapidly and decorously, in the sanctuary of the Town-hall; while the non-electors, who were ninety-nine hundredths of the whole community, waited outside the building, well provided with the time-honoured ammunition of civil combat, until the moment arrived for their part in the ceremony. When the result was declared the successful candidates piteously implored to be excused the compliment of being chaired through the streets. But their supporters were inexorable. The doors were thrown open; the procession issued forth into the market-place; and, as soon as the faces of the new members were recognised by the people whom they were supposed to represent, the dead cats began to fly.

That was the case at Cambridge; and a similar state of things prevailed in Winchester, and Salisbury, and Tiverton, and Dartmouth, and scores of other towns. The most scandalous examples were the Cinque Ports of Kent and Sussex. The constituency of Seaford, which lay between Brighton and Beachy Head, was in the hands of a family party of magistrates, who went by the title of Jurats. They included a Clerk in the Ordnance, with a salary of two thousand pounds a year, who made a practice of sleeping one night of the three hundred and sixty-five within the borough "in order to constitute a legal residence;" a Storekeeper of the Army, with the same salary of two thousand pounds a year, a Deputy Paymaster of the Army, and a Paymaster's brother, who all three were non-residents; a Supervisor of Customs; a Comptroller of Cloth and Petty Customs; and a Patent Waiter in the Custom-house of the Port of London, who lived neither in London, nor at Seaford, but on his farm near Woodstock in Oxfordshire. In the list of freemen there were eight or ten Revenue Officers; the Town Clerk; the Recorder of the Borough; the Master of the Robes to the

King; a superannuated boatman; a broken tide-waiter; and an individual whose title to public confidence was that he had been reprimanded by a Committee of the House of Commons for prevarication. Two out of the four freemen of the derelict and land-locked borough of Winchelsea were Custom-house officials with very handsome emoluments. Among twenty-four freemen of the borough of Rye there were a Comptroller, a Collector, and a Surveyor of Customs; three mates or captains of Custom-house cruisers; six Riding Officers of the Customs; and half-a-dozen landsmen who drew pay and allowances as the crew of a Custom-house rowing-boat which never put out to sea. Such was the municipal constitution of the Cinque Ports ten years after the American war ended; and, when North and Sandwich were in office, it had been worse, instead of better.

The connection of the Revenue Departments with the baser forms of local jobbery contaminated and degraded politics; while it injured the credit, and impaired the efficiency, of the Preventive Service itself. For many years past, under a long succession of administrations, people had been made Custom-house Officers because they were electors, or had been made electors because they were Custom-house Officers; and that demoralising process was extraordinarily accelerated ever since Lord North became Prime Minister. The extent of the evil was exposed by Lord Rockingham with the quiet authority which attached itself to his words, whenever he could be induced to speak them. "There was," he said, "a particular borough in which there were five hundred voters; and one person, who happened to live in terms of intimacy with the First Lord of the Treasury, had got no less than a hundred and twenty of them appointed to places under Government." On the same occasion Lord Rockingham made himself responsible for the statement that eleven thousand five hundred Custom-house Officers and Excisemen, endowed with the parliamentary franchise, and exerting it under orders from their official superiors, were judiciously dis-

tributed up and down the United Kingdom; and that the election was turned by Revenue Office votes in no less than seventy Scotch and English constituencies. When Lord North's Government fell, the control and manipulation of this immense machinery of electoral influence passed automatically into the hands of Lord Rockingham; but that honest and lofty-minded man resolutely and emphatically declined to keep himself in power by such unworthy methods. One of the first laws which the new Ministry placed upon the Statute Book was an Act "for better securing the freedom of Election of Members to serve in Parliament by disabling certain officers employed in the Collection and Management of His Majesty's Revenue from giving their votes at such Elections." That measure was piloted through the House of Peers by Lord Rockingham himself, and was welcomed by many self-respecting public servants who were heartily ashamed of being subjected to the obligation of voting, irrespective of their own political opinions, in obsequious obedience to the Government of the day.[1]

Those who have had practical experience of Scotchmen in politics, — and who know their fervid and sustained interest in national affairs, and the straightforward and single-minded energy with which they manage their electoral contests, — may wonder that Scottish public spirit did nothing to vivify and purify the corrupt parliaments of the eighteenth century. But Scotland was then the blackest spot in the political map of the United Kingdom. She had sixteen hundred thousand inhabitants, forty-five parliamentary representatives, and a total constituency of less than four thousand voters. Her urban members were chosen by indirect election. Delegates from four or five municipal corporations would meet together on a stated day in order to nominate a gentleman who should serve in parliament for their group of burghs. The value of

[1] *Parliamentary History;* XXIII, 101.

indirect election, as a machinery for popular representation, depends absolutely on the character and composition of the primary assembly which names the delegate; and the primary assemblies of Scotland consisted in small, self-elected, town-councils, averaging less than a score of councillors apiece, which were so many hotbeds of petty intrigue, and shameless venality. When it came to the election of a Member of Parliament, Glasgow, with her fifty to sixty thousand citizens, and a rank and standing in British commerce which was relatively almost as exalted then as now, had only one vote out of four with three insignificant communities possessing not a tenth part of Glasgow's population between them. Edinburgh, alone among towns and cities, enjoyed the privilege of having a representative to herself, who was chosen, not by the people of Edinburgh, but by an absurdly constituted electoral college of some three-and-thirty city dignitaries, — Provosts, and ex-Provosts, and Deans of Guild, and Bailies, and Trade Counsellors, and Ordinary and Extraordinary Deacons, — in whose persons all the political rights of the Scottish capital were vested.

The electoral conditions which prevailed in the rural districts of Scotland were, if possible, more anomalous still. A bad law, dating from the reign of Charles the Second, and interpreted with gross laxity and partiality by the Court of Session, had so doctored and bedevilled the county representation that it had altogether ceased to reflect the genuine sentiments and opinions of the Scottish people.[1] We have, on good authority, a de-

[1] "By the Act of Charles the Second the immediate vassal of the King has the sole right of voting, or being elected to serve in Parliament. By an ingenious device of the lawyers, when a person of great property wishes to multiply his votes, he surrenders his charter to the Crown. He appoints a number of confidential friends, to whom the Crown parcels out his estate, in lots of four hundred pounds Scots valued rent. Then he takes charters from these friends for the real property; thus leaving them apparently the immediate tenants of the Crown, and consequently all entitled to vote, or to be elected." *Introduction to the History of the Counties and Royal Boroughs of Scotland.*

tailed account of the working of this preposterous system. "The class of landowners excluded from the franchise," wrote Mr. Oldfield, "are men of estates worth from five hundred to two thousand pounds a year; but, (what is more to be lamented,) it comprehends the best and most virtuous part of the community, namely the middling and smaller gentry, and the industrious yeomen and farmers who had inherited or acquired some landed property." On the other hand a large amount of money, and of perverted legal acumen, was expended upon the manufacture of fictitious qualifications, technically known as Superiorities, which conferred the franchise wholesale upon the brothers and cousins, the friends and retainers, — and, in too many instances, the flatterers and boon-companions, — of certain wealthy noblemen and commoners who held directly from the Crown. These satellites of the great territorial proprietors undoubtedly had names and abodes of their own; but they were habitually classified and described as the voters of the Duke of Gordon, the voters of the Earl of Fife, the voters of Sir Gilbert Elliot, the voters of Mr. Hamilton of Grange, or the voters of Mr. Fraser of Lovat.[1] Their names covered half the very few pages, and in some cases the single page, of the register of electors in almost every Scottish county. Taking the real and the spurious voters together, there were only thirty-seven on the roll for Peeblesshire; forty for Selkirkshire; forty-five for the immense region of Argyleshire; from twenty to thirty for Caithness, and Nairn, and Kinross; sixteen for Clackmannan, and a dozen for Bute, and less than a dozen for Cromarty. They were a flock limited in numbers, and very docile and obedient so long as they were bountifully supplied with provender. Henry Dundas, who was the most

[1] Robert Burns, in his First and Second Ballads on the Election for the Stewartry of Kirkcudbright, castigates with uncompromising vigour the voters who were hangers-on of noble houses. One or two of them are left almost in as bad a pickle as if they were Florentine politicians who had displeased Dante.

unabashed of wirepullers, distributed all the patronage to the north of the Tweed among the privileged electors of Scotland, besides drawing for their benefit upon the resources of English jobbery much more freely than was at all agreeable to South-country applicants for posts in the public service. The party agents, on either side of politics, kept a careful record, written up to date, which afforded all essential information about the twenty-six, or twenty-seven hundred county voters of Scotland. The notes and comments on each individual name are precise, plain-spoken, and strictly to the purpose. "Not rich. Requires an office, or other promotion." "Old, and unable to come to an election. Has a daughter married to Mr. Forbes, the Contractor for coppering ships." "Has a brother with an office in the Stamps at Glasgow." "An old travelling-tutor to Lord Mountstuart." "Has a son who was made Agent for Teinds by Mr. Dundas." "Has been obliged to Mr. Dundas, to whom he is Deputy Keeper to the Signet. The Crown Agent. An only son in the army. Is pushing for a Clerkship of Session." "An old gentleman. Has a Revenue office in the Stamps in England. Will, it is said, be influenced by the Earl of Sandwich."[1]

Lord North and his associates not unnaturally regarded the existing electoral arrangements as an ideal system of national representation. As practical men they valued the tree for its fruits; and the politicians sent to Westminster by Cornish boroughs were exactly the sort of people whom King George's Ministers would themselves have picked out from the London clubs if they had been

[1] These extracts are from "A confidential Report on the Political opinions, Family connections, or Personal circumstances, of the 2662 county voters in 1788," as prepared for the use of William Adam, and Henry Erskine, who had undertaken the uphill task of managing the interests of the Whig Opposition in Scotland. Some of the entries are pleasant reminders that there were other pursuits in the world besides place-hunting. "Rodham Home of Longformacus. Once in the Navy. Owes everything to Home, the author of Douglas." "James Boswell of Auchinleck, the author of Johnson's Life, and other Tracts. A very good estate in this county. Married an Ayrshire lady. A young family. Wishes to be a candidate for the county."

given power under the constitution to nominate members of parliament by arbitrary selection. The senior member for Launceston was described as "a Privy Councillor, Lord Warden of the Stannaries, and Steward of the Duchy of Cornwall, who affects to hate the House of Commons, but never fails to obey Mr. Robinson's summons." The senior member for St. Mawes was "Vice Treasurer of Ireland and one of the King's Friends, who has been in four successive parliaments, and has never yet voted against a Minister." A member for St. Germans was "Storekeeper of the Ordnance, and a very well-bred gentleman;" a member for St. Michael was "a Government contractor, and ready on all occasions, both in and out of Parliament, to oblige the Treasury;" and Sir Ralph Payne, one of the two representatives of the nineteen Camelford electors, was "a Clerk of the Green Cloth, and the very humble servant of Mr. Robinson, — a very pompous man, fond of sonorous expressions, and fonder still of his green ribbon, who generally attends the House after dinner, and in his conversation abuses the Opposition." Meanwhile the junior member for Penryn, whose special vocation it was to keep an eye upon the rest of the Cornish contingent, was "brother-in-law to Mr. Secretary Robinson, whom he assists in counting the House, and for that purpose generally sits below the Bar."[1]

These men, and a multitude like them, formed a solid phalanx of drilled and disciplined partisans, — bound to the Ministry by close ties of material interest, impervious to argument, caring not one straw for public opinion, and standing in no awe whatever of their own constituents, who had been sold to them, like a parcel of serfs attached to the soil, by the previous owner of their borough. When a division was called they went

[1] These remarks are extracted from a *Personal Account of the House of Commons, addressed to the Freeholders of England* by a writer in the Evening Post of the year 1779. The author of this production dealt severely with jobbers and sinecurists; but he evinced a kindly feeling towards the independent supporters of Lord North, and was free with his strictures upon members of the Whig Opposition.

forth into the Lobby, or remained seated in the body of the House, at a whispered word of command from the Secretary of the Treasury. They cheered Lord North's speeches; they placed his Bills on the Statute Book; and they voted him all the national money which he demanded in the well-grounded expectation that a substantial portion of it would sooner or later find its way into their own pockets. However inexcusable might be the errors of His Majesty's Ministers, and however formidable might be the calamities which their policy entailed upon the country, they were secure of impunity so long as the majority of their supporters were the bribed and submissive members for bribed and subservient constituencies. "A party," said Edmund Burke, "which depended upon rational principles must perish the moment that reason is withdrawn from it. I am convinced that, if a Whig ministry had but suffered half the losses and disgraces that this Ministry have suffered, and had committed but a tenth part of their blunders, they would not have found a Whig to stand by them in England."[1]

The House of Commons, as then constituted, was in no true sense of the word a representative assembly; and, on the American question in particular, it had fallen out of touch with much that was shrewd and sound in public opinion. The repeal of the Stamp Act in the year 1766 had been hailed with relief and satisfaction by most Englishmen as a statesmanlike concession which promised to be the final solution of our Colonial difficulties. They were sadly bewildered and disappointed when the old trouble arose in an aggravated form as a consequence of the imposition and enforcement of a new set of Custom-house duties on American imports; they could not understand why the Ministry had not been content to let well alone; and they viewed with intense repugnance and disapproval the military

[1] Edmund Burke to Richard Champion; August 13, 1779.

occupation of Boston. But, when the four great cities of America repelled the tea-ships from their shores with ostentatious insult and violence, the British people were fairly carried off their feet by a brief, and exceedingly formidable, outburst of anger and wounded pride; and Lord North and his colleagues, taking instant advantage of the opportunity, were able to force their whole scheme of penal legislation through both Houses of Parliament with a considerable amount of public enthusiasm behind them. The hot fit, however, soon passed away. The American war, almost from the first, was exceptionally unpopular with the industrial and trading classes; and that sentiment spread and deepened rapidly after the summer of 1778, when Burgoyne had been captured at Saratoga, and Clinton had retreated from Philadelphia, — when France had declared herself our open foe, and half Europe was in secret league against us. From that time forward the mass of private citizens, on whose industry and thrift the power of Great Britain was founded, were in strong opposition to the politicians who lived upon politics, and to the favoured, and in most cases not very estimable, section of the community which throve upon the distress of the nation, and the profits of war.

The principal hunting-ground of these sinister personages was the district protected by the British fortifications on the peninsula of New York. The proceedings which took place within that impenetrable enclosure were removed from the observation of the Revolutionary party in America; and our knowledge of a state of things, which would be incredible if related by an enemy of British rule, is almost exclusively derived from Loyalist sources. Allowance must be made for the natural indignation of men who had been plundered and cheated by the underlings of a Government which professed to be their friend and champion, and for whose sake they had sacrificed all that they held dearest; but, though there may have been some exaggeration in their complaints about matters of detail, the main outlines of the story, beyond all question whatever, were dark and shameful.

The pick and flower of King George's faithful and devoted adherents had taken refuge in the city of New York, and there was ample material out of which to compose an efficient and trustworthy civil administration. With almost pitiful reiteration, (we are told,) these capable and honest men petitioned for the re-establishment of local self-government. They urged that such a measure could not impede military operations, and that "the sooner that desirable event should take place, the better would the British Government be prepared to receive under its protection those who were weary of the sanguinary conflict in the colonies."[1] These views were pressed upon the notice of the Earl of Carlisle, and of his brother Commissioners, in admirable letters from Chief Justice Smith, the leading Magistrate in the Colony of New York;[2] but his representations were opposed and scouted by that William Tryon who, from first to last, was the evil genius of the royal cause in America, and by old General Robertson, the coarse and corrupt veteran who had succeeded Tryon as Governor of the city. New York, and its dependency of Long Island, remained under the lax and ill-informed control of army officers; and the harvest of jobbery, if reckoned in pounds sterling, surpassed anything that is elsewhere recorded in the dreary and sordid annals of military government. "It is no wonder," wrote a shocked and angry American Loyalist, "that John Bull gets tired of this war not against rebellion, but against the Treasury of Great Britain."[3]

Robbery and extortion, — tentative, and comparatively

[1] This extract is taken from the 11th chapter of Professor Van Tyne's *Loyalists in the American Revolution;* a thoughtful and instructive treatise which perhaps is the most impartial authority upon a vexed and intricate question.

[2] *Manuscripts of the Right Honourable The Earl of Carlisle, at Castle Howard.*

[3] *History of New York during the Revolutionary War, by Thomas Jones, Justice of the Supreme Court of the Province;* Volume I, chapter 12.

timid, to begin with, — were soon methodised into a system which was pursued with barefaced impudence, and absolute impunity. The officials in charge of the administrative departments, relying sometimes on the connivance, and still more often on the cynical indifference, of the generals in command, stripped the rebels; bullied, cheated, and underpaid the Loyalists; and then sold the proceeds of their exactions to the British Government at fancy prices. The Commissaries of Hay and Forage, who had invented a special device of their own for befooling and swindling the farmers, made money hand over hand, and accumulated large, and for that generation enormous, fortunes. The Commissaries of Cattle got into their own possession the Whig flocks and herds which had been captured or sequestered, sold the beef to the army at two shillings sterling a pound, and disposed of the heads, skins, and hides by private bargain. The Barrack Masters charged rent to the Crown for the use of churches, and breweries, and colleges, and even of Quaker meeting-houses, and did not return a single farthing either to the individual, or to the corporate bodies, whose property those buildings were. They drew a still larger revenue from the forests on Staten Island and Long Island, selling fuel to the troops at an extravagant figure, and charging private householders in New York city four pounds a cord for firewood which they had taken from Whig proprietors for nothing, and had bought from Tory proprietors for fifteen shillings a cord. The Commissary of American Prisoners, who might deal as he chose with his hapless and defenceless flock, speedily became a man of visible and notorious affluence upon his salary of a guinea a day. The Commissary of Artillery purchased horses by the hundred for fifteen pounds apiece, and jobbed them to the Government for ten shillings a day. The Engineer who superintended the repair and reconstruction of the rebel forts upon Manhattan Island, — which Washington's officers and soldiers had erected without a dollar of extra pay, as part of their daily duty, — came

home with overflowing pockets, and "purchased one of the genteelest houses in Portland Place, a noble country-house in Surrey, set up his carriages, and had a house full of servants in rich liveries." That was the allegation, not of a Whig newspaper in Boston, nor yet of a Whig orator in the British Parliament, but of a Judge in the Supreme Court of New York who had been ruthlessly and relentlessly persecuted for his loyalty to King George. The Quartermaster of the Army, who provided General Howe with teams and waggons for his campaign in Pennsylvania, was said to have made a hundred and fifty thousand pounds by that single transaction; and no fewer than four military officers, who held the same appointment in succession, returned to England one richer than another. Lord North at last fell from power, and his place was taken by a Prime Minister of old English probity and public spirit, almost the first act of whose administration was to nominate Sir Guy Carleton Commander-in-Chief in America, and despatch him straight across the sea to New York. Lord Rockingham had an eye for an honest man, and he well knew that it needed something of a Hercules to clean out such a stable. So Carleton set to work in fierce earnest, and what remained of that gang of ineffable rascals was promptly sent to the right about.[1]

Our island soon swarmed with government contractors, and government officials back from America, who gave themselves airs of fashion and importance, although they had nothing of the aristocrat about them except their ill-gotten opulence. It was a cruel sight for the manufacturers of Lancashire and Yorkshire,

[1] Some few years afterwards the Lord Lieutenant of a Tory Government was explaining to the Secretary of State in London that there was no means of bringing to justice public peculators who had escaped across the Irish Channel. A certain Colonel, (so His Excellency wrote,) who as Deputy Quartermaster General had amassed upwards of £400,000 in America, was now in Ireland, buying every estate that came into the market, and laughing in the face of the Government Law Officers. *The Marquis of Buckingham to W. W. Grenville; Blackrock, October 18, 1788.*

many of whom were already bankrupts, while others lived on the verge of insolvency, — their factories empty and silent, and their warehouses gorged with unsaleable goods, — doing their utmost out of their dwindling means to keep their unemployed workmen from sheer starvation. Decent Englishmen had no patience with these upstarts of worse than doubtful antecedents, who flouted and out-shone the old business families, and displaced them from their long-established position in the social world. Not less intolerable was the condition of those British merchants who now were learning by harsh experience that, in a naval war between formidable and determined antagonists, it is the nation with the largest commerce which must necessarily be the greatest sufferer. Their ships, many of which were of such value as to constitute a rich man's fortune, were being taken by the enemy at the rate of more than five hundred in every twelvemonth. Their American trade, and their Mediterranean trade, were extinct; their trade with China and Hindostan had been terribly scourged; and their trade with the West Indies, and with the Baltic, had been very much more than half ruined. They found it a poor consolation to be told by the newspapers that certain lucky naval officers were rolling in prize-money. Our merchants had begun to hate the very name of prize-money, with all its associations of rapacity and arbitrary violence on the one hand, and of misery and humiliation on the other. They knew the history of the neutral goods, and the British goods, which Rodney had seized as plunder on the Island of Saint Eustatius; and they bitterly complained that the war had been perverted from a struggle between the military forces of rival governments into an engine of spoliation directed against the peaceful commerce which benefits all mankind. They regarded plunder and prize-money as nothing better than survivals from those dark and half-civilised ages in which the lives, the freedom, and the property of the conquered were at the disposal of the victor whenever a town had been stormed, a rural

district had been over-run, or a trading-vessel had been captured.[1]

Most men who were guided by their reason had ere this arrived at the clear conviction that the nation was engaged on a hopeless undertaking. Until America was vanquished, or pacified, it was idle to expect that the wars with France, and Spain, and Holland, could ever be brought to a successful issue; and, as time went on, and the prospects of Great Britain darkened, the other naval Powers of Europe would gradually, or all together, align themselves in the ranks of our enemies. Englishmen, at the outset of the colonial troubles, had been grievously misled by people in high office who ought to have known the real state of matters better than any private citizen. Parliament was loudly and confidently informed that the American colonists, in the proportion of two thirds, or three fourths, or four fifths, (for words cost nothing,) were firm and devoted adherents of the Crown. That was what the British people were asked to believe; but it was not borne out by the condition of things which prevailed beyond the Atlantic Ocean. Every State to the north of the Carolinian border, — and, before the war ended, every State in America, — was strongly governed in the interests of the Revolution by rulers appointed by the people, and obeyed by the people; whereas there was not a single colony, throughout the

[1] The Duke of Wellington, — as many passages in the course of his noble and humane military career conspicuously proved, — held a decided opinion about the barbaric origin of plunder and prize-money. Lord Broughton, when Cabinet Minister for Indian Affairs, reports an interview which he had with the Duke at Apsley House in the year 1839. "We walked about the room together," (he wrote,) "talking on Indian matters, and more particularly on the claim put forward by the agents of Lady Hastings for a share in the Deccan booty. He characterised this as infamous, and told me he had written a second memorandum which he thought would settle the question. He told me that his definition of booty was '*what you could lay your bloody hand upon, and keep;*' and he suited the action to the word by putting his outstretched hand upon the table, repeating his saying more than once in his peculiar fashion." Lord Broughton was so deeply impressed by the old man's earnestness of voice and gesture that he wrote down in capital letters the sentence which is here printed in italics.

whole length and breadth of America, where the partisans of the British connection had elected a Loyal Assembly, had chosen a Loyal Governor, and had taken over the administration of their native province into their own keeping. The Ministerial theory that the Loyalists were in a large numerical majority was a severe, and most unmerited, reflection upon the friends of the Royal cause. A party which could allow itself to be out-voted, and silenced, and arbitrarily governed, and in many cases cruelly handled, by an insignificant minority of opponents, would have been sadly deficient in self-respect and moral courage; and such very certainly was not the case with the American Loyalists.

The condition of nullity to which the Civil authority of the Crown had by this time been reduced in America is reflected in an exceedingly able letter by Mr. Andrew Elliot, the Lieutenant Governor of New York, who was brother to Sir Gilbert Elliot, the famous King's Friend in the House of Commons. In January 1781 this gentleman reported upon the practicability of getting a law passed for the purpose of enforcing the collection of Customs Duties in the Province of New York, — the single one among the thirteen colonies in which the British power had any substantial foothold whatsoever. "The Province of New York," wrote Mr. Elliot, "is in rebellion, and under a usurped Legislation, except Long Island, Staten Island, and the small Island on which the Town is situated, one third of which Town lies in ruins, — the necessary garrison, and Public Departments, occupying two thirds of the Buildings that escaped the Fire; and Forts, Posts, and Barracks, dispersed over all the three Islands, make the whole Territory in possession of His Majesty's Arms in this Province in fact a garrison. * * * Can an Assembly composed of the Members sent from these Islands, so small a proportion of the Provinces, enact Laws that will be binding on the whole when Reconciliation takes place?" If Mr. Elliot had chosen to go into particulars he might have added that, in the New York market, a leg of mutton sold for a guinea, a

fowl for six shillings, and a fresh egg for threepence; — and threepence then was a full equivalent for sixpence now. In point of fact the only considerable tract of land where the Royal flag was still flying was little better than a constantly menaced, and at times a closely blockaded, fortress.

Sandwich and Rigby, whenever they could contrive to drag the matter into a debate, had told the House of Lords, and the House of Commons, that the Americans were cowards who would run away at the first glimpse of a red coat. That was the declared view of those two Ministers who exercised the responsible military functions of First Lord of the Admiralty, and Paymaster of the Army. And now, in the sixth and seventh years of the war, after near a score of hard-fought general engagements, and a hundred skirmishes, every fresh battle was contested more fiercely and stubbornly than the last. The Royal forces in Georgia, and Virginia, and the Carolinas, were manifestly unequal to the task of reducing, and holding in subjection, that immense tract of country; and, if they had been multiplied fourfold, they would have been insufficient still. The strategical situation in the summer of 1781 was vividly described by an admirer of Lord Cornwallis. "That noble and brave commander," (so the passage runs,) "has done great things, and may be said to have worked wonders. But what effect have his furious battles and dear-bought victories had? What impression have they made upon the provinces which he has traversed? Nothing more than throwing a stone into the water. It disunites and disturbs at the moment of its descent; and then the surface returns to its former state. Everywhere it is his complaint that he finds more enemies, and fewer friends, than he has been led to expect. He might fight for seven years more, and at last sit down where he began, and lament the lives lost, the treasure spent, and the havoc made by war to no purpose." That was a true picture of the Southern compaign; while in the Northern and Central States of America the British

generals had renounced even the idea of aggressive operations during three entire years, although British money was still poured out like water, and an army numerous enough to have garrisoned Portsmouth, and Plymouth, and Chatham, was locked up, in that hour of Britain's peril at home, behind the line of forts on Manhattan Island. Undoctored evidence about the state of London opinion was afforded by the movements of the Stock-market. When it became known in Lombard Street, and Threadneedle Street, that Horatio Gates had been defeated in North Carolina, the Three Per Cents fell, instead of rising. The City had been under an impression that regiments were to be withdrawn from America in order to prosecute the war against France; and it was now foreseen, to the pronounced dissatisfaction of the business world, that the victory at Camden would encourage the Cabinet to persevere in their invasion of the Southern States, and draft troops from England to reinforce Lord Cornwallis.[1] America, (said Horace Walpole,) was like the Holy Land; for none but bigots or madmen talked of subduing it.

"Supposing America subdued," (wrote the Bishop of Llandaff to the Duke of Rutland,) "what will you do with her? You have no prison large enough to hold her. You have no troops numerous enough to garrison her. You have no fleet large enough to prevent her infringement of the Navigation Act, which, though great before, will be a thousand times to one greater now."[2] That letter was dated in September 1781; and it expressed, forcibly and concisely, a belief which already for a year past had been the intimate persuasion of cool-headed Englishmen. The coercion of Massachusetts had been undertaken in wrath; and, now that the continuance of the war was fatally impolitic, a principal motive for persisting in it was the vindictive temper which reigned in high quarters. The King, and the

[1] *London Evening Post* for October 1780.

[2] *Fourteenth Report, Appendix, Part 1, of the Historical Manuscripts Commission.*

Bedfords, who almost alone among his Ministers shared his resentment, and cordially embraced his policy, did not conceal their desire to afflict and punish, since they were evidently unable to subjugate, the rebellious Colonies; but many, and most, of King George's subjects regarded the people of America with a feeling which was not unkindly. They could not forget that their opponents were Englishmen, with a deeper grievance even than their own against the same set of perverse and unwise rulers, speaking the very same mother-tongue, professing the same religion, and owning the same great history, and the same glorious literature, as themselves.[1] The Americans justified their political action by precedents derived from the Long Parliament and the Revolution of 1688. When they met the Royal armies in the field they fought a stand-up battle in the old English style; they advanced to the charge with an English cheer; and, if the day went against them, they begged for quarter in English words, if not with the purest of English accents. Our countrymen had little relish for those details of mutual slaughter which filled the newspapers, and had long ago ceased to look for their favourite reading in what Sir George Savile called "bloody Gazettes."[2]

The American prisoners in England were as wretched and denuded as all other inmates of an eighteenth century jail. A contemporary Whig writer of high authority acquitted the Government of any harsh intention towards

[1] The literary taste of the day was the same in Great Britain and in America. Private letters from Virginians and New Englanders were thickly interlarded with quotations from Shakespeare; and parodies on Chevy Chase appear with wearisome frequency in the contemporary verse of both nations. Among the longest, and most elaborate, of these compositions was poor Major André's satire on General Anthony Wayne, which gives the measure of what may be accepted as good writing by the comrades of a popular staff-officer in the tedium of a long campaign. The Reverend William Gordon tells how Lord Percy, when riding forth to Lexington at the head of his soldiers, was greeted by a Boston schoolboy with an allusion to his ancestor's fate as recounted in the ballad.

[2] William Eden to Paul Wentworth; December 5, 1777. *Stevens's Facsimiles in the British Museum.*

them; although there was negligence, and official blindness, and reluctance to call untrustworthy subordinates to a close reckoning. The subsistence money allowed by the Treasury, if honestly administered, would have been sufficient in respect to the mere article of food; but the Americans in custody suffered greatly, and in the winter months insupportably, for want of clothing, coals, firewood, and bedding.[1] A public subscription was set on foot for their relief. The response was generous, and continuous; and the proceeds were distributed, with admirable delicacy and consideration, by men trained in works of charity. It is pleasant to learn, from a letter addressed to Edmund Burke on Christmas Day in the year 1777, that there were Tories, as well as Whigs, who gave their names and their money to so humane, and, (in the true sense of the word,) so patriotic an object.[2] In the same month the Earl of Abingdon moved an Address asking for information about certain alleged abuses in the treatment of the American prisoners. He was a young nobleman who had obtained an ephemeral reputation by a pamphlet attacking Edmund Burke for his lukewarmness towards the American cause. Abingdon has been described by John Wilkes as a steady and intrepid assertor of liberty; and we can read his remarks, for whatever they were worth, exactly as they were uttered, inasmuch as he was in the habit of sending his speeches to the newspapers with a handsome fee to secure their insertion. On this occasion he stated his case without tact or judgment, in a most offensive and provocative party tone; but the Peers, to their honour, declined to regard the health and life of captured enemies as a party question. The feeling of the House was such that the Government prudently kept the Earl of Sandwich in the background, and put forward the Earl of Suffolk, who frankly and unreservedly accepted the motion, which was carried without a dissentient voice.

[1] *History of Europe in the Annual Register for 1778;* chapter 5.
[2] William Baker to Edmund Burke; Bayfordbury, December 25, 1777.

Several years afterwards, when the war was drawing to a conclusion, some American prisoners made their escape from confinement in the city of Winchester, and were re-taken by a party of the Sussex militia. Their captors paid for their dinner; and the serjeant made them a present of five shillings which he had collected in small sums from the soldiers under his command. The prisoners, who felt that they had been kindly treated, drew up an address of thanks to the officers of the regiment, and took the opportunity of stating, in plain and manly language, the political motives which had induced them to carry arms against the British Government. It was a liberty for which the poor fellows were aware that some excuse was needed. "In a paper," (they wrote,) "dictated by the warmest feelings of the heart, malice itself cannot discover disrespect, even if the heavy hours of a prison render misery loquacious." The appeal was not ill taken by those to whom it was addressed. The Sussex militia, like many other people, were very ready to fight the French; but long before November 1781 they had grown exceedingly weary of the quarrel with America.

During the later years of the American war there were plenty of quiet and industrious people, on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean, who thoroughly understood the true interests of their respective countries, and who were perfectly prepared to live as friends whenever their Governments would agree to stop the quarrel. In April 1783, even before it was known for certain in the United States that peace had been concluded with Great Britain, Sir Guy Carleton received a voluminous and interesting report from a confidential agent in New York.[1] "Many of the merchants," (so this gentleman wrote,) "applied to me to forward letters to merchants in London with whom they wished to form connections; all agreeing that, when the animosity incidental to a Civil War was subsided, if Great Britain would adopt

[1] This paper appears among the American manuscripts in the Royal Institution of Great Britain, early in the Fourth Volume.

proper methods with America she will still, from the similarity of religion and manners, retain the principal trade of it, and the attachment between the two countries will be as strong as ever." The closing words of that sanguine prophecy were a very long time in reaching their fulfilment; but they have come true at last.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE COUNTY ASSOCIATIONS. THE LORDS LIEUTENANTS.

ENGLAND was in dire straits; but her case was not hopeless if only the English people possessed the common sense, and the political energy, to work out their own salvation. It was a happy feature in our national life that the standard of public duty, and of personal honour, was still as high in the English counties as in the best days of our history. The Knights of the Shire, on both sides of politics, were not inferior in station and character to the Cavalier and Puritan gentlemen who were elected to serve in the two famous parliaments of the year 1640. A Whig county member, at the period of the American war, was usually a rural magnate like Humphrey Sturt of Dorsetshire, or John Parker of Devonshire, or Edward Eliot of Cornwall, — old family names which are now merged in the titles of Peerages. The Tory county member, meanwhile, was sometimes a converted Jacobite, and almost always a sturdy fox-hunter, who wanted nothing from the Patronage Secretary of the Treasury; who had his own notions about public matters; and who kept his hands clean, and his conscience in his own control. A typical specimen of the class was the senior member for Lincolnshire, Lord Brownlow Bertie, uncle to the Duke of Ancaster, who, though inclined to the Ministry, frequently quitted the House when the question was not such "as he could vote for agreeably to his own feelings."[1] A county elector very generally liked and esteemed his members, even when he differed from them in politics; and the members had good cause to be proud of their constituents. The freeholders, as a rule, were not above enjoying the fun of a contested

[1] *London Evening Post* for May 1779.

election. They drank their favourite candidate's health in a great deal of his own ale, and allowed themselves to be carried to the polling-town, at his expense, in a post-chaise with four horses; but they gave him their vote because he was a trustworthy party man, and an esteemed friend and neighbour. It was useless to send down to such a constituency a rich West Indian planter, or a Nabob from Bengal, or a voluble lawyer with his eye on the Woolsack, or a sprightly young courtier with a portmanteau full of Civil List guineas.

"A beardless boy comes o'er the hills,
Wi' uncle's purse, and a' that;
But we'll have ane frae 'mang oursel's,
A man we ken, and a' that."

Such was the sentiment expressed by Robert Burns in the finest of all his election songs; and such was the dominant feeling in nine out of ten of our English counties.

The freeholders of Hertfordshire, and Monmouthshire, and Norfolk, and Yorkshire, and Northamptonshire had little in common with the sham electors in a Cornish proprietary borough, where the advowson of the constituency, which conveyed the privilege of appointing two British senators to every parliament, could be bought at a few days' notice for thirty thousand guineas down.[1] The voters of the English shires exercised the franchise under an honourable sense of individual responsibility. They were proudly conscious that their counties were the last refuge of English freedom and English self-respect, and that they themselves were acting on behalf of millions of their fellow-countrymen who, at a grave crisis in the fate of the nation, had no adequate means for making their opinion felt. As the American difficulty unfolded itself in more and more alarming proportions it became apparent to reflective minds that the

[1] A careful calculation, made with full knowledge of the circumstances, in or about the year 1863, proved that the price, or fancy-price, of a borough returning one member to Parliament had by that time risen to sixty thousand pounds. In this case the seat was soon afterwards disfranchised by Mr. Disraeli, and the purchaser lost his money.

best hope for Great Britain was a measure of parliamentary reform which would largely increase the number of representatives allotted to populous and independent communities. Lord Chatham was the first to suggest that a third member should be added to every county "as a balance to the mercenary boroughs;" and Turgot, in a letter of great length, and of very remarkable power, informed one of his friends in England that the same line of thought had led him to the same conclusion. "If," he wrote, "in your political agitations you would reform your Constitution by making elections annual, and by granting the right of representation in a more equal manner, your gain from the American Revolution would perhaps be as great as that of America herself; for your liberty would remain to you, and your other losses would be soon repaired." [1] That was the view of the two wisest statesmen, and ablest administrators, in the two leading nations of the world; but it was very far from being the view of the Bedfords. When young William Pitt, holding his father's creed, and aspiring to carry out his father's policy, proposed to add several representatives to the metropolis, and assign another Knight of the Shire to every county, Rigby told the House of Commons, briefly and roughly, that he would rather see more members given to Old Sarum, "where there was but one house," than to London, which in his judgment had quite enough members already.

"We are all well," (wrote Edmund Burke in September 1779,) "as far as we can be so in the present dreadful state of anxiety to every man in the nation except those they call Ministers." A sense of public danger, and private distress and poverty, was just then seldom absent from the reflections of all thoughtful Englishmen. There have been few periods in our history when so large a proportion of our people kept a jealous, an attentive, and a most intelligent watch upon the course of

[1] *Reply of Lord Chatham to an Address from the Common Council of London;* June 1, 1770. Lord Chatham to Lord Temple; April 17, 1777. Turgot to Doctor Richard Price; Paris, March 22, 1778.

public events. England was bound hand and foot by the trammels of an inequitable political constitution; but her mind was active and uncontrolled. That trait in the national character is finely and faithfully depicted in another letter which, two years previously, Burke had addressed to one of his Bristol supporters. "You will not," he there said, "listen to those who tell you that these matters are above you, and ought to be left entirely to those into whose hands the King has put them. The public interest is more your business than theirs; and it is from want of spirit, and not from want of ability, that you can become wholly unfit to argue or to judge upon it." The inhabitants of those great industrial constituencies which had retained their independence, their self-respect, and their integrity, thoroughly understood the nature of the existing crisis, and had detected the source from which emanated the flood of calamity that overspread the land. They clearly saw that the time had arrived when it behoved them to take their fate into their own hands, and declare an open and uncompromising war against secret influence, and parliamentary corruption. The long and arduous contest on which they now entered, — with sad and heavy hearts, but with inflexible resolution, — was marked by striking and unexpected alternations of success and failure. But the will of the people at last prevailed as against the power of the Court; and the country was rescued, only just in time, when it already stood upon the brink of ruin.

In December 1779 a political agitation, on a scale surpassing anything which was reached until the crisis of the Reform Bill of 1832, rose like a thunderstorm from the blue, and spread with startling rapidity throughout our island. Yorkshire, with its vast acreage; its wealth of coal and iron; its woollen industries, which so recently topped the markets of the world, but which never again could flourish until the country was once more at peace; — and, above all, with its manly, shrewd, and masterful, but law-abiding population; — stood to the front as a worthy fugleman of that spontaneous

national movement. On the last day but one of the old year the freeholders of Yorkshire were convened in County Meeting. They attended in force, undeterred by the inclement season, and by the formidable distances which most of them had to travel. They knew the road to York; for, when a general election came, every qualified householder of the three Ridings, in whatever corner of those six thousand square miles his dwelling stood, had been under the necessity of finding his way to the provincial capital in order to cast his vote. Six hundred landowners, and millowners, and graziers, and farmers, and tradesmen crowded the body of the hall; while among them, and opposite to them, sat the Dukes of Devonshire and Rutland; the Marquis of Rockingham; the Earls of Scarborough, and Effingham, and Egremont, — together with Earl Fitzwilliam of Wentworth House, and of County Wicklow in Ireland, who by himself was more of a potentate than three out of four of the lesser German princes. When doubts were thrown in the House of Lords upon the respectability of the Yorkshire meeting, Rockingham, suiting his arguments to his audience, affirmed that there were persons present on that occasion, "within the compass of a single room, who possessed landed property to the amount of eight hundred thousand pounds per annum." Side by side with the peers, and on an equality with them, were such commoners as Mr. Edward Lascelles of Harewood, and Sir James Lowther, and Sir George Savile. The distinguished group included the heirs and namesakes of three out of the seven noblemen who, in June 1688, at deadly hazard to their own lives and estates, had signed the invitation to William of Orange. The Opposition journals triumphantly enumerated a large contingent of clergymen of the Established Church who dignified the assembly by their presence, and who evinced a zealous interest in the proceedings; but even a Whig historian must admit that this free manifestation of Whig sentiment in such an unusual quarter may have been encouraged by the aspect of the patrons of so many

hundred livings who were arrayed in serried ranks upon the platform. The hall was crammed to its utmost capacity, but the meeting was not packed in the sense in which that term is so often used. Any freeholder, whatever were his political opinions, might come, and stay, and speak, and vote if he could find seat or standing-room; and the longest, and certainly the most provocative, address came from the mouth of a supporter of the Government.

The extreme view held by the Court party was expounded by Mr. Leonard Smelt, the sub-governor of George the Third's two eldest sons, and a well-known talker in London society. He began by protesting that it was strange presumption to refer to His Majesty as a servant of the public, — a name which, (it may be remarked in passing,) even so autocratic a monarch as James the First regarded as among the proudest of his titles to honour. Mr. Smelt vehemently declared that King George was the best patriot, or rather the only patriot, in the nation; and that, if any grievances existed, they arose from the Crown having too little power rather than too much. He told the manufacturers, who did not take the information kindly or quietly, that, so far from being ruined by the war, they were not taxed heavily enough; and he then went on to apostrophise, in what he intended to be scathing language, the great territorial proprietors who had lent their countenance to the popular movement. "When those," he said, "who possess, from hereditary claim only, all the distinctions of society, and who have a thousand of their fellow-creatures employed on hard work to contribute to their ease and luxury, talk of the equality of men, and their right to change the government under which they live, all subordination, all order, all decency is at an end." Sir George Savile, — who could split hairs, and chop logic, with the best when the subject demanded it, — summed up the case against Personal Government in the plain and downright style that suits the taste of Yorkshire; and a petition to the House of

Commons, drawn up beforehand by his skilful pen, was read to the meeting, and adopted amidst a tempest of acclamation. The gist of the matter was contained in a single sentence. The petitioners, (so it was represented,) observed with grief, that, notwithstanding the calamitous and impoverished state of the nation, much public money had been improvidently squandered, and many individuals enjoyed sinecure places, and pensions unmerited by public service; by which means the Crown had acquired a great and unconstitutional influence which, if not checked, might soon prove fatal to the liberties of the country. The Ministerial press pronounced the document to be an overt act of treason, which rendered its author liable to the condign penalties inflicted upon the Jacobites after the rebellion of 1745. "The battlements of York," wrote the Morning Post, "will be the first ornamented, and will speedily be dismantled of the remains of the unhappy insurgents to make room for some heads of the true viper-breed of Rockinghams and Saviles." It was a prophecy which missed fulfilment; and the city of York, as all good North-countrymen know, contains to this hour a very different memorial of that historical County Meeting. Sir George Savile died in 1784; and within the cathedral, against the outer wall of the choir, amidst architecture as august and beautiful as any in the Kingdom, his statue was erected by subscription as a mark of "the public love and esteem of his fellow-citizens." He is there represented leaning on a pillar, with a scroll in his hand which purports to be the Petition of the Freeholders of the County of York. The conception, and the framing, of that famous instrument, in the judgment of Savile's own generation, constituted the most important national service which he rendered during his honourable and serviceable career.[1]

[1] An amusing account of the Yorkshire meeting may be found in a sprightly letter to Horace Walpole from an eyewitness, the Reverend William Mason. What appears to be a full report of Mr. Smelt's speech is given in the collection of pamphlets at the Athenæum Club.

The fire which had been kindled in the North set the whole country in a blaze. Within a week, — and a week was no long time for news to consume in travelling before the days of Macadam, let alone of George Stephenson, — the action taken by the Freeholders of Yorkshire was known over the whole district which now is styled Greater London. Several important noblemen, with the Duke of Portland at their head, prevailed upon the Sheriff of Middlesex to summon a County Meeting, which was held at Hackney on the seventh of January 1780. Hackney was then a pleasant semi-rural resort described by the Gazetteers of the period as among "the earliest of the adjacent villages inhabited by the more opulent merchants of the metropolis." A petition was unanimously voted which prayed the House of Commons, in set terms, to adopt measures for the reduction of the too great and unconstitutional influence of the Crown, and for restraining the enormous abuses in the expenditure of public money. Hertfordshire followed suit, and Sussex, and Surrey, and Cumberland, and Norfolk, and the County Palatine of Chester; and, before the year was much older, the electors of no fewer than twenty-six of the English shires, in County Meeting assembled, had spoken their minds with the utmost frankness, but with no extravagance of language. The business of the day was not unfrequently crowned by a jovial banquet of English beef and venison, with a long list of significant and suggestive political toasts which most certainly were not drunk in home-made English wines. The discussions in these County Meetings were always serious and orderly, and entirely free and open; but there was little difference of opinion when the matter came to a vote. In Somersetshire, where North himself was Lord Lieutenant, the Court and the Cabinet did not find a single supporter. The Earl of Sandwich had thought it worth his while to attend the proceedings at his county-town in person. He brought down with him a motley train of sham Huntingdonshire freeholders with fictitious qualifications, — a Government contractor,

two members of the Greenwich Hospital staff, some officials from the General Post Office, the Receiver of Waifs and Strays on the High Seas, a son of the King's Gardener, and one of the King's Beef-eaters. But the genuine electors of Huntingdonshire did not allow themselves to be browbeaten, and still less to be out-voted. "On the holding up of hands," (we are told,) "there appeared a prodigious majority for the petition. Lord Sandwich then attempted to divide the company, but the majority was so large that his friends were obscured." The Northumbrians met at Morpeth, where the only hands held up against the petition were those of "Mr. Trevelyan's curate," and a stray Scotchman from across the Border, whose name was mis-spelled by the reporters. The Duke's Steward, when he observed the tone of the meeting, had come to the conclusion not to oppose the motion; and later in the afternoon there was a marked contrast, in point of festivity, between the social gatherings of the two rival parties. "The Duke's servants dined together, sullen and discontented; while the most perfect good humour, the greatest harmony, and the most determined and independent spirit pervaded the whole company who supported the petition." [1]

Meetings and speeches are essential to the promotion of a cause; but all great movements, whether political or religious, depend largely for success upon the machinery of their internal organisation, and upon the silent and continuous labour which it is now the fashion to call spade-work. That truth was well known to Wesley, and Wilberforce, and to Daniel O'Connell, and Richard Cobden, and all other masters in the art of moulding and guiding public opinion; and it obtained

[1] The details of the Huntingdonshire and Northumberland meetings are taken from a London newspaper. A general history of the movement appears in a very long note, on pages 1370 to 1373, of the twentieth volume of *The Parliamentary History*. Allusions to the County Meetings are as frequent in the fashionable literature, and private correspondence, of the year 1780 as allusions to the proceedings of the Anti-Corn Law League in the spring and summer of the year 1845.

full recognition from the able statesmen who, in the later years of the American war, engineered a national agitation against the excessive power of the Crown. The Freeholders of Yorkshire, before they left their hall, had appointed sixty of their number as a permanent committee "to carry on the necessary correspondence for effectually promoting the object of the Petition, and likewise to prepare the plan of an Association to support such other measures as would restore the freedom of Parliament." In the course of the next week Middlesex nominated a Committee of Correspondence and Association, consisting of fifty gentlemen "distinguished by rank, fortune, ability, or popularity;" and the example was followed by much the largest number of the petitioning counties. George the Third and Lord North had no liking for the County Meetings, but they were still more gravely alarmed and perturbed by the County Associations. The traditions left by the Long Parliament, and the Civil War, were nearer and fresher by a hundred and thirty years then than now; and the very name of County Associations recalled ominous memories of those Associated Counties which had bred an Oliver Cromwell, and had contributed almost as much as the City of London itself to overset the Stuart dynasty. The East of England seemed as hot against the Crown in 1780 as ever it had been in 1642. Norfolk, and Suffolk, and Essex, and Cambridgeshire, and Herts, and Hunts, had all petitioned; and all except one were sending delegates to the General Convention of the Associated Counties, Towns, and Cities. For most of the great urban communities which, in one shape or another, had retained the privilege of popular representation, and which were accustomed to the play of active politics, eagerly and unhesitatingly threw in their lot with the popular cause. The Marquis of Rockingham, who always was careful to make good his assertions by facts and figures, informed the House of Lords that the Petition from the city of York had been signed by nine hundred and twenty

persons, although not more than nine hundred and seventy-two had polled at the last election, which had been warmly contested.[1] Meetings had been held, and petitions voted, by the town of Nottingham with its seventeen hundred freemen and freeholders; by Newcastle upon Tyne with its two thousand five hundred burgesses, each of whom was a member of a Guild;[2] by Gloucester with its three thousand resident electors; and by the City of London, and the City of Westminster, situated in critical proximity to the doors of the King's Palace and the Houses of Parliament, and containing between them more registered voters than any other ten borough constituencies in the island.

The lighter aspects of the Economical Reform movement of 1780 are amusingly portrayed in the letters of the Reverend William Mason, a Canon of York Cathedral, and an admired poet, as poets then went. One of his most amusing pieces was a Birthday Ode, of a very uncourtierlike complexion. He told Lord Harcourt, (impudently enough, seeing that Lord Harcourt was a King's aide-de-camp,) that an Ode conceived in such a spirit, and sung in the Chapel Royal, with the whole choir joining in the execution, would have more effect than all the County Petitions together. Canon Mason, like other amateur agitators, was all for sensational methods. "Nothing can save us," (so he wrote to Horace Walpole,) "but what the people will never have the spirit to resolve upon. I don't mean a civil war, but a civil and pacific resolution not to pay any taxes. For instance, an exciseman comes to demand my post-chaise tax. I suffer him to bear home on his shoulders my pianoforte. * * * How do you like my system? I know you dislike it, because you would sooner be taxed ten shillings in the pound than part

[1] *Parliamentary History;* XX, 1350.

[2] Out of 2166 electors, who polled at the Newcastle contest of 1774, 186 belonged to the Guild of Merchants, 235 to the Guild of Butchers, 322 to the Guild of Smiths, and 132 to the Guild of Barber Surgeons. There were Hoastmen, and Mariners, and Feltmakers, and Pewterers, and Cordwainers, by the score; but only three Unattached Burgesses.

with Cardinal Wolsey's hat, or Harry the Eighth's clock-weight." Mason's advice was not adopted. Never, before or since, has there been a great political movement more free from the taint of folly or criminality. There were no outrages; there was no turbulence; no weapons were employed except arguments; the most outspoken opponents were accorded a respectful hearing in the most crowded public meetings; and the triumph of the cause came all the sooner on that account, and was all the more sweeping and decisive. The same freedom from lawlessness and violence, and the same complete and ungrudged success, were repeated, a century afterwards, in the case of the movement for the enfranchisement of the County Householder.

Some leading men of the Opposition, among whom was Edmund Burke, were at first disinclined to expect much assistance to their cause from the action followed by the County Freeholders. They could not forget the fate of the great petition from the Congress at Philadelphia in the summer of 1775, which, if accepted in the spirit wherein it had been offered, would have ended the American war. Drawn up by John Dickinson, the most eminent of Colonial Loyalists, subscribed by leading politicians of both parties, and carried across the Atlantic by no less a special messenger than William Penn's grandson, it had been cast aside as so much waste paper when it reached its destination in London. The exhibition of indifference and disregard which, in that supreme instance, was set by the King and the Ministry, had been imitated in like cases by the House of Commons. "The great constitutional remedy of petition," wrote Edmund Burke, "is fallen into discredit already, by being thrown into the House, and neglected ever after." [1]

There seemed very little hope that an exception would be made in favour of the Yorkshire Freeholders. Elaborate misrepresentations, going far beyond the

[1] Edmund Burke to Richard Champion, Esq.; January 29, 1780.

limits of veracity, had been diligently circulated for the purpose of discrediting their Petition before it was presented to Parliament. The Ministerialist newspapers circumstantially assured their readers that these Freeholders were the dregs of mankind, and that the Petition agreed upon at the meeting had been hawked about the country until it was "scrabbled over with the marks of drunken and illiterate ploughmen," and then sent up to Westminster "to lie at a blind alehouse" where it had been signed by as many Yorkshire ostlers as could be spared from their work in the London livery stables. Sir George Savile however, nothing daunted, discharged his mission to Parliament on the eighth of February 1780. The matter could not have been entrusted to a more respected and influential advocate. Charles Fox long afterwards, drawing upon the reminiscences of a lifetime, told his nephew Lord Holland that Savile was the best speaker who had never held office.[1] But Savile's character was more efficacious even than his eloquence. He acquired, at an early age, a silent and uncontested authority over his parliamentary colleagues; and it was acknowledged by the more combative and factious members of his own political connection that his walking out, or staying away, was fatal to the success of any party motion.

Savile's speech, on this occasion, was well reasoned, and singularly manly and dignified, as became a country gentleman who always did his duty to his constituents and to the nation with no personal ends of his own to serve. He laboured under difficulties, for he had been extremely unwell, and his voice was weak, and far from clear; but the House was "remarkably still and attentive," and such was the silence prevailing along every bench that not a single word was lost.[2] He brought

[1] Fox, when making this remark, coupled together the names of Sir George Savile, and William Windham. But it must be remembered that Windham eventually became a Secretary of State; whereas Savile lived, and died, a private member.

[2] *Parliamentary History;* XX, 1374.

forward ample evidence to refute the allegation that the Reform movement had been "instigated by a few incendiaries operating upon simple and credulous people in hedge alehouses." He described that movement as "the result of the common feeling" of all ranks and all classes, — the voice of the true Yorkshire, which had already met with an echo in other parts of the country. On this point he grew warm, and even vehement; but, except when he was vindicating the honour of his county, his remarks were in a high degree courteous and conciliatory. He argued that there was nothing in the wording of the Petition which reflected on either political party, and that both parties might do themselves honour by adopting it. "The noble Lord at the head of the Government," said Savile, "if he has a mind, can by one nod induce a majority of this House to grant the prayer of this petition; or, if he pleases, he can put it off with an abundance of ingenuity and address. I call upon the noble Lord to speak out like a man, and to declare whether he means to countenance and support this Petition or not." North, when his turn came, replied shortly and very quietly. He acknowledged that the Petition had been properly introduced, and deserved to meet with "a fair and candid attention;" but it was noticed that he studiously abstained from saying anything which could be construed into an expression of willingness to approve the prayer.

There the matter should by rights have ended. But the subject was novel, and very interesting; there was a crowded House, just in the mood to enjoy a fine speech; and Charles Fox was not the man to disappoint his brother members. He rose to the occasion; and his performance was such that the pressmen, who were taking down his words in the Gallery, interspersed their report with short phrases testifying to the wonder and delight which his animation and his ingenuity evoked. London, for some days afterwards, was talking about the extraordinary success of the peroration in which Fox gave his followers the watchword for the momentous

parliamentary campaign that now was opening. "I cannot imagine," (so the last score, or so, of his sentences ran,) "that any objection can possibly be made to this Petition. But some may say; 'Are we sinners above all that went before us, like those upon whom the Tower of Siloam fell? Are we more corrupt than other parliaments, which were never pestered with petitions of this kind?' No: I do not suppose you are; but, though former parliaments were as bad as you, — and none, more than yourselves, are aware of the full severity of that comparison, — there was this difference that, in those days, the people did not know it. Now they perhaps do not *see* it, but they *feel* it. They feel the pressure of taxes. They beg you not to lay your hand so heavily upon them, but to practise all reasonable economy. We on this side of the House recommend and enforce their applications. Let Ministers hearken to the petitions of the people, even though they are commended to their notice by members in opposition. Let them grant their requests, and the whole glory of so popular a compliance will be theirs. We all remember in what loud strains their praises were sounded for conceding to the people of Ireland what that people made good for themselves with their own muskets. I will put the controversy between Ministers, and gentlemen on this side of the House, on the same issue on which the wisest of men rested the determination of the dispute between the women, each of whom claimed the living child, and disowned the dead one. We say to Ministers: 'You misapply the public money. Nay, you do worse; you apply it to bad purposes.' Ministers say to us: 'You want our places;' and thus the charge of corruption is given and retorted. Come now; let us see whose child Corruption is. Opposition are willing, are desirous, that it should be sacrificed; and Ministers have often made similar professions. The time has come to prove the sincerity of both. Let us see who will now acknowledge, let us see who will father, this dear but denied child Corruption." It may

be doubted whether the most eloquent of divines, in any pulpit, has ever put King Solomon's Judgment to more effective rhetorical use; and the House of Commons unanimously ordered that the Petition from Yorkshire do lie upon the Table with a heartiness, and an emphasis, which were very inadequately expressed by that antiquated formula.[1]

The feeling against Lord North's Government was intensified by the deep dissatisfaction with which Englishmen resented the anomalies and abuses of their electoral system. The pioneer in the movement against all that was amiss in our parliamentary representation was a man who deserves more lively public gratitude, and more intelligent public recognition, than have hitherto fallen to his lot. The fame of Major John Cartwright is now very dim; and few, perhaps, of those Londoners whose daily business takes them past his rather melancholy and depressing statue, in a Crescent to the north of Oxford Street, ever thinks of him as a valiant champion of popular rights, to whose courageous and lifelong efforts it is largely due that they themselves have a citizen's voice in the government of their native country. John Cartwright was as much the father of Parliamentary Reform as Granville Sharp was the prime author of the agitation against African slavery. Cartwright had been a brave, and most competent, fighting sailor in Chatham's war; but, when hostilities broke out between England and her colonies, he donned the red coat in place of the blue, and made himself as efficient an officer on land as he had been on board ship. The militia battalion, of which he was the life and soul, speedily became a model of discipline, good conduct,

[1] Ministerial journalists, after the debate on Savile's motion, quoted Charles Fox's boyish speeches at the time of the Middlesex Election as being inconsistent, (which they most unquestionably were,) with what he was now saying about the respect due to national opinion outside the walls of Parliament. Fox himself would have been the first to allow it.

and military spirit. Cartwright had refused to draw his sword against the liberties of America; he pleased himself by reflecting that he was now engaged in defending the liberties of Great Britain against the despotic and arbitrary Government of France; and his frank and manly avowal of his convictions did him no harm either with his military, or his naval, superiors in those liberty-loving days. He retained the friendship and confidence of his old admiral, Viscount Howe; and he was held in high esteem by that Lord Percy who had covered the British retreat from Lexington, who had borne a distinguished part in the capture of Fort Washington, and who now was the general in command of the military district in which Cartwright's battalion lay. The officers of that battalion respected their Major none the less on account of his political opinions. "I have shown my colonel," (he wrote in September 1775,) "a drawing I have made of a regimental button. The design consists of a Cap of Liberty resting on a book, over which appears a hand holding a drawn sword in its defence. The motto is 'For our Laws and Liberty.'" The device was well liked; and the button continued in use in the Nottinghamshire Militia for many years afterwards. Cartwright survived to see darker days; and he eventually resigned his commission because he had given offence in high quarters by approving, — as an Englishman, (so it might be thought,) could hardly fail to approve, — the destruction of the Bastille.

Cartwright endured his full share of the persecution directed against humble people of Liberal opinions during the long years of repression and reaction which followed on the French Revolution; but all who have studied the personal history of the time cannot fail to be struck by his moral superiority to certain other radical reformers of those sad, and rather sordid, days. He belonged to a class who are never too numerous in politics, for he was an enthusiast with plenty of common sense, and altogether exempt from what then were the besetting faults of the agitator. He had none of Cobbett's

fierce and aggressive egotism, of Henry Hunt's loose morality, of William Godwin's want of delicacy in affairs of money. Cartwright was generous with his purse, instead of being a beggar or a borrower; and he was always ready with his praise and sympathy for others, instead of exacting from them a tribute of flattery and admiration for himself. Singularly forgiving towards his detractors, and even his calumniators, he did his best to sweeten the acridness of political controversy; and his simple and lofty nature, more persuasive than his arguments, gave him an assured influence over most of those with whom he came into personal contact. Horne Tooke declared in conversation that half a dozen men of Major Cartwright's firmness, in as many of the English counties, would have stopped the American war. In the year 1776 Cartwright published a treatise on Parliamentary Reform which was almost the first of its class.[1] It was marked by a violence and exuberance of language which the writer of it soon learned to regret, — and which he had plenty of time to tone down, for during eight-and-forty years to come he was busily engaged in issuing pamphlets, and making speeches, on the selfsame topic. The passage in his earliest book which attracted most attention was his pointed reproof to Whig magnates in both Houses of Parliament who attacked the Ministry on subsidiary questions instead of going to the root of the matter, and advocating an extension of free and equal electoral privileges to the whole community. Any leading man of the Opposition, (said Cartwright,) who should not immediately pledge himself by the most explicit declarations in favour of Parliamentary Reform, was nothing better than a factious demagogue, careless of the true interests of his country as long as he himself could hope to come in for a share of power and plunder. That was not the style in which a great nobleman, who had

[1] "Though a younger man than yourself, I am your senior in Reform. You first published on that subject in 1776. I published in 1774." Earl Stanhope to J. Cartwright, Esq.; December 17, 1815.

condescended to espouse the popular cause, expected, or liked, to be written about by a member of his own party. The Duke of Richmond, — with the book in his pocket, turned down at the offending page, — introduced himself to the author, and complained of the uncharitableness of throwing doubts upon his integrity, and upon the purity of his motives. He was agreeably surprised by the calmness and gentleness of his reception. That pair of gallant and honest men soon arrived at a common understanding which ripened into a close friendship; and the Duke did not rest satisfied until he had proved his sincerity by introducing into the House of Lords a Bill for equal electoral districts, manhood suffrage, and annual parliaments.

Towards the commencement of the year 1780 the burgesses of Nottingham chose Cartwright as their delegate to the Convention of Associated Counties and Cities, where his influence at once became visible, and, before long, predominant. A vigorously drafted pronouncement in favour of Parliamentary Reform began to make its appearance among the resolutions submitted to public meetings, and on the lists of toasts which were honoured at public dinners; and the text-book of the agitation was a slashing manifesto from Cartwright's pen, entitled "The People's Barrier against Undue Influence and Corruption." This unforeseen addition to the party programme was not welcomed by Edmund Burke. The question of Parliamentary Reform, for which, at all times in his life, he had no feeling except most sincere repugnance, would in his opinion frighten back a great number of moderate and judicious people into the Ministerial ranks, and, (at the very best,) would distract attention from that question of Economical Reform which he had so near his heart. Burke's view of a political situation is always best given in Burke's own words. "I am sorry to see," (he wrote in April 1780,) "that the Committee, when they met in London, had turned their thoughts towards a change in the constitution, rather than towards the correction of it in the form

in which it now stands;" and a few months afterwards he characterized parliamentary reformers as visionary politicians; — "schemers, who do us infinite mischief by persuading many sober and well-meaning people that we have designs inconsistent with the constitution left us by our forefathers."[1] Burke's apprehensions were shared by several of the great Whigs who immediately surrounded Lord Rockingham; but, while these worthy gentlemen were hesitating and grumbling, and lecturing each other in private letters of inordinate length, of the sort which renders so many political biographies such dreary reading, their followers promptly, and almost unanimously, took the matter into their own hands. An agitation in support of Parliamentary Reform went briskly forward, side by side with an agitation for a revision of our national expenditure; and the combined movement was stimulated by dislike of the American war, and by a growing sense of the mortal peril in which the nation stood. It was the awakening, and up-rising, of that class of citizens whom, in his own time and country, President Lincoln used to call "the plain people." The great body of industrious and independent Englishmen was at last conscious of its own strength, and firmly resolved to employ that strength for the rescue and regeneration of England.

The Court and the Ministry were surprised, almost to bewilderment, by this sudden and unprecedented manifestation of national sentiment. The Bedfords, in particular, had no bounds to their indignation; and their wishes, if not their intentions, were reflected in that portion of the London press which they subsidised and inspired. The Ministerial newspapers did not scruple to bring fierce and reckless charges of treason and disloyalty against patriotic statesmen who were endeavouring to save the King, and his kingdom, from the consequences of an untoward policy. They accused

[1] Edmund Burke, Esq., to Joseph Hartford, Esq.; April 4, 1780. Edmund Burke, Esq., to Joseph Hartford, Esq., Sheriff of Bristol; December 27, 1780.

Lord Rockingham of scheming to overturn the throne; and, with more exquisite absurdity still, they denounced Edmund Burke as a sworn foe of the British constitution, and a hater of the kingly office. "It is to be hoped," they wrote, "that a Great Personage may conceive so just and spirited a resentment of the indignities offered to Majesty by a certain Republican Marquis, and his Hibernian pensioner, as never to admit them to his counsels again." They foretold, with an air of speaking by authority, an approaching campaign of vengeance against all who attacked the Cabinet by speech or pen. It was positively announced that Ministers had fully determined to take proper steps against every mouth, and every printed paper, which had sought to stir up revolt among the people. Editors and publishers of Opposition newspapers were soon to learn that something more serious than imprisonment would be the reward of their seditious writings. "Fortunately for our country we happen to be very amply provided with a certain very necessary, and highly essential, ingredient for putting a finishing climax to rebellion. We have hemp, — hemp in abundance." It was idle talk, which did not even rise to the dignity of being seriously mischievous. England was in no mood for a Bloody Assize, inaugurated for the purpose of keeping Mr. Rigby, and Mr. Welbore Ellis, in office. The condition of public feeling was such that assailants of the Government enjoyed too much license, rather than too little. They wrote more audaciously and pungently than ever; and yet press prosecutions, which had been so frequent during the fight over the Middlesex Election, had long ago fallen into complete abeyance. The Crown Lawyers were well aware that juries would refuse to convict for bold attacks upon parliamentary corruption, and for searching criticisms on the conduct of the war, which most people read with pleasure, and which everybody knew to be true; and the Cabinet feared the printers much more than the printers feared the Attorney General. No twelve citizens, who could be got together in

a box, would agree to send an Opposition newswriter to jail for reflecting upon Lord George Germaine's American strategy, or on the private morals of Lord Sandwich, or on Mr. John Robinson's method of securing a majority in the House of Commons; but on the other hand they were ready enough to lay by the heels a Ministerial newswriter who traduced a leading statesman of the Opposition as a traitor to his country, and a rebel to his Sovereign.

The Ministerial press might bluster and threaten; but the Ministers themselves were perfectly well aware that, in the last resort, they did not possess the physical force to keep the country down. For a warning of the perils in which they would be involved, if they were rash enough to embark upon a proscription of their political adversaries, they had only to cast their eyes across the Irish Channel. In England, as in Ireland, the requirements of the American war had reduced the regular army to very small dimensions; in England the main burden of national defence now lay upon the Militia, as in Ireland it lay upon the Volunteers; and in England, as in Ireland, the smartest and most efficient, and incomparably the most popular and influential, officers of the auxiliary forces were members of the Opposition party. Savile himself, and Lord Scarborough, and Lord Lumley, who between them led the Reform movement in Yorkshire, held commissions in the West Riding battalion of Militia, which was popularly known as "Sir George Savile's regiment." Such colonels as the Earl of Derby, and the Duke of Devonshire, had spared no money or trouble to provide for the health and comfort of the tenants and neighbours whom they commanded in camp and garrison; they had brought to their military duties the ardour of private citizens, and the zest and freshness of a new and engrossing occupation; and they had made themselves as capable as the best professional soldiers for every legitimate purpose of warfare. The rank and file of the Militia battalions were eager to come to blows with the French and Spaniards; but they had

no desire whatever to coerce or punish their own countrymen, and least of all their own colonels, for conducting a political movement in strictly constitutional fashion.

George the Third was not blind to the risks of the situation, which he regarded as formidable, but not irremediable; and, where the King thought that he saw his way clear before him, he was never afraid to act. In those days of slow and uncertain locomotion, when the central Government for the most part confined itself to the management of national affairs, while the provinces were strongly and solidly organised on an antique and feudal basis, the Lord Lieutenant of a county was a very great man indeed. In addition to his other important functions he was titular chief of the militia, and selected the subalterns from among those young squires who were ambitious to hold a commission in the local regiment. The ablest of these high dignitaries, and by many degrees the most obnoxious to the Court, was the Duke of Richmond. The King, who looked upon him as a personal enemy, was loth to entrust him with so large a share of military power. Richmond, foreseeing that Sussex, of all counties, would be the most exposed to the dangers of a French invasion, had a scheme for raising twenty-four additional companies of local infantry; and that proposal, (in George the Third's view,) would enable the Duke "to bring forward his own creatures." It so befell that in August 1779 this hot-headed, and very self-willed, nobleman committed an indiscretion which the King, with some reason, pronounced to be a flagrant disobedience to orders; and Lord North was directed to eject the Duke of Richmond from his position as Lord Lieutenant of Sussex, and take advice about the proper person to be appointed as his successor. "I can never," (wrote His Majesty,) "admit the idea that his expulsion is wrong lest it should make Opposition Lords resign their Lieutenancies. If this should actuate them to such a step, the sooner that office of dignity is in more friendly hands in every county the better." The Lieutenancy of Sussex was thereupon

offered to three peers in turn; but the feeling of the whole district was such that they all thought it prudent to decline the honour, and the Duke of Richmond was left in secure possession of his office.

On the eighth of February 1780 the Earl of Shelburne moved for a Committee of Enquiry into the Public Expenditure in a speech of exceptional scope and power. He took into the Lobby a large following, which included Henry Herbert, who was tenth Earl of Pembroke, and the Marquis of Carmarthen. Pembroke was an officer of the King's Bedchamber, and Lord Lieutenant of Wiltshire; while Carmarthen was head of the Queen's Household, and Lord Lieutenant of Yorkshire. These noblemen knew what was expected of them, and they both voluntarily resigned their Court employments; but, to their vast surprise, they were ejected from their Lord Lieutenancies, — Carmarthen on the morning of the division, and Pembroke on the morrow.[1] The King made it the occasion for the assertion of a high and far-reaching doctrine. "I cannot choose," (so he told Lord North,) "that the Lieutenancy of Wiltshire should be in the hands of Opposition." England is still so much the same country that it is easy for us to judge the effect produced upon the nerves of our great-great-grandfathers by such a summary course of action. Stupendous would even now be the commotion excited in political circles if a pair of modern peers were deprived of their Lieutenancies as a punishment for voting in a party division against the Government of the day. The Lords Lieutenants, as a class, were very proud of the influence and authority attached to their office; they valued the distinction only less than the Garter; and their indignation knew no bounds when two of their

[1] The Marquis of Carmarthen, during the lifetime of his father the Duke of Leeds, sat in the House of Lords as Baron Osborne. A few days after the Yorkshire meeting he had sent a letter to the Committee "approving in general of their proceedings, but making some objection to the scheme of Association, and to the proposed Committees of Correspondence." *History of Europe in the Annual Register for 1780;* chapter 5.

number were cashiered with as little ceremony as a couple of tide-waiters or excisemen in a Ministerial borough who had polled for the Opposition candidate.

The transaction was exposed and reprobated in Parliament by the Earl of Shelburne, who had introduced the motion which Lord Carmarthen and Lord Pembroke had supported to their cost, and who resented the treatment inflicted upon them as a personal insult to himself. He urged his contention with fearless logic, and unsparing acrimony; Lord Camden discoursed with judicial gravity on the excesses and encroachments of arbitrary power; and the Duke of Richmond made a terrible example of a foolish peer who had punctuated every stage of the American controversy with blundering phrases, and who on this occasion surpassed himself by alluding to noble Lords on the Opposition benches as "enemies of the Crown." The veterans of debate exerted themselves to the top of their abilities; but the speech of the afternoon came from an unaccustomed quarter. The Duke of Devonshire, although well on in life, had never opened his mouth in the House of Lords. He felt all that reluctance to address a public assembly which others of his race, with much to say that was worth hearing, have with difficulty conquered. On this occasion, however, he spoke, and spoke out. Though he had hitherto, (he said,) been silent about politics, which were disagreeable to his taste and temper, he should think himself base and degenerate if he remained any longer indifferent, for at the existing crisis he was sincerely of opinion that the Ministry were not capable of retrieving the affairs of the country, and were very unequal to the task they had in hand. "I approve," he said, "of the County Meetings, and consequently of the Associations, without which the petitions would be of no avail. I have nothing to hope for except the peace, prosperity, and welfare of my native country; and I have no temptation to encourage domestic broils, or civil confusion. I have a considerable stake to lose, and can be no further a gainer than as an Englishman interested in the preserva-

tion of the Constitution, and in the invaluable rights, liberties, and principles derived from it." We are told that the whole House listened in profound silence while the Duke addressed it "with a firmness and facility which seldom accompany a maiden speech, and in a tone of voice and energy which plainly evinced the sincerity of his convictions, and the warmth of his sentiments." [1]

The political atmosphere was overcharged with electricity; and men, who did not neglect or scorn the teachings of history, waited in anxiety for the storm to break. The poet Cowper, in the most telling passage of an interesting letter, pointed out an essential resemblance in the results of the policy of George the Third and Charles the First. He noticed how "the undue extension of the influence of the Crown, the discountenancing and displacing of men obnoxious to the Court, though otherwise men of unexceptionable conduct and character," and the wasteful expenditure of public money, were features common to both periods; and he bade his correspondent observe that the same causes had already begun to produce the same effects as in the reign of the most unhappy of British monarchs. "It is long," wrote Cowper, "since I saw Lord Clarendon's account of it; but, unless my memory fails me much, I think you will find that the leaders of the discontented party, and the several counties in their interests, had a good understanding with each other, and devised means for the communication of intelligence much like our modern committees of correspondence. * * * So many gentlemen of the first rank and property in the Kingdom, resolutely bent upon their purpose, — their design professedly so laudable, and their means of compassing it so formidable, — would command attention at any time. A quarrel of this kind, even if it proceeded to the last extremity, might probably be settled without the ruin of the country, while there was peace with the neighbouring kingdoms; but while there is war abroad, — such an extensive war as the present, — I fear it cannot."

[1] *Parliamentary History;* XXI, 223.

CHAPTER XIX

FOX AND ADAM. ECONOMICAL REFORM. THE DUNNING RESOLUTION.

A MOST important truth, which is borne in upon a careful observer by the experience of a long life passed in the handling, and the contemplation, of public affairs, is that an outburst of popular enthusiasm cannot be created lightly, and does not come by wishing. A genuine, a wide-spread, and an effective interest in political questions recurs at longer intervals of time than sanguine politicians please themselves by believing; but there is no doubt whatever that, during the early months of the year 1780, the mind of the nation was at last alert and alive, and had begun once more to concern itself with the pursuit of a national ideal. Sickened by a long course of misgovernment, and weary of an exhausting, and, (for any good purpose that could thenceforward be served by it,) an objectless war, many, and very many, Englishmen looked for the salvation of their country to better laws, and to wiser rulers. The tide was rising fast; and Charles Fox swam strongly, and with no apparent effort, on the summit of the wave. It was the most brilliant, the most prosperous, and the happiest period of his chequered existence. He enjoyed, beyond his deserts, the favour and indulgence of his contemporaries; and he had an ample share of that miraculous good fortune which, in the history of celebrated men, so often falls to the lot of youth. Nothing seemed impossible to his fresh and clear intuition, his native audacity, and his indomitable energy; and he succeeded as those succeed who cannot so much as contemplate the prospect of failure.

When matters were at their very worst at home and abroad Fox never faltered in his assured persuasion that

all would yet go well with England. His cheery patriotism brightens and enlivens a long series of letters to Fitzpatrick in which his boyish handwriting reads as easily as print; and it must be admitted that some of the phrases which he employed were still boyish enough. That intimate and unstudied correspondence gives a vivid account, drawn hot and hot from the most authentic sources, of the hopes, though not the fears, of the most critical juncture which our national history records between the time of the Great Armada, and the time when Napoleon lay encamped along the cliffs of Boulogne. On the twenty-seventh of August 1779 Fox wrote to his friend from Mr. John Parker's mansion at Saltram in Devonshire, on a day when a hostile fleet, numbering between sixty and seventy sail of the line, was hourly expected back in the English Channel, and when the only naval force immediately available for the defence of our coast was Admiral Darby's squadron in Torbay. "I shall dine," he said, "on board Jervis, Wednesday, and from thence proceed to London according as, upon the general face of things, I think anything likely to happen here. The fleet today was a most magnificent sight; * * * and, faith, when one looks at it, and thinks there is a possibility of its coming to action in a day or two, *on se sent ému beaucoup*. If some things were otherwise at home, and the fleet was commanded by Keppel, one should feel very eager indeed when, even in the present damned state of things, one cannot help feeling something at the sight of it. It seems to be the opinion that, if they do come, Darby will make some sort of fight with them in the narrow part of the Channel;" — and in the peril and excitement of that fight Captain Jervis had faithfully promised that Charles Fox should share. A week afterwards Fitzpatrick informed Fox that Lord North contemplated resignation. "I thank you for your letter," was the reply, "and think the news it contained the best possible; for I really think there is now a possibility of saving the country if these foolish people

will give up the thing to those who know better. Between this and the next campaign there is time for increasing the navy incredibly, or for, (what would be much better,) making a peace; which we should dare to do, and these poor devils dare not."

Throughout the whole of the year 1779 Fox, with few to help him, had been at no small pains to hearten and to unite his party. The clever men and women, who informed George Selwyn of what was passing in the ranks of the Opposition, were all in the same story. In the middle of May James Hare told his old crony that nothing important was stirring, although Charles was "in excellent wind," and all the more so for being out of place. A fortnight later on the Countess of Upper Ossory wrote that she herself was fairly sick of politics, but that "others would grieve if there was not a Charles Fox to spirit them up." Ceaselessly and strenuously at work as long as the House of Commons was sitting, Fox spent the recess in a course of multifarious activities directed towards a well-defined and, (as the result proved,) an attainable object. His published and unpublished letters to Richard Fitzpatrick supply an indication, though far from a complete list, of his journeyings to and fro over the South of England, and of the great country-houses to which he carried, in rapid succession, his inspiring and most acceptable presence. A peer or squire, who judged that a visit from his eloquent and seductive leader would stimulate political feeling in the district, knew that the best way to make sure of his man was to send him intelligence of a flight of woodcocks; and Charles Fox attracted round him all the Whigs of the neighbourhood as certainly as the woodcocks attracted Charles Fox. Wherever he went he exerted his powers of persuasion over the task of keeping his parliamentary supporters up to the mark, and cajoling young men of wealth and leisure to stand as candidates at the general election which was now imminent. He was constant in his attendance at every place of resort where politicians congregated. He was

much in Norfolk, which, next to Yorkshire, was the head-quarters of the Rockingham connection; and more especially at Keppel's manor-house, where he was never tired of talking with the Admiral, and, (if the man's own account can be trusted,) with the Admiral's gamekeeper. Halfway through October it was announced in the Fashionable Intelligence that the Honourable Mr. Fox had driven into Salisbury Camp on a Review-day in a phaeton with four horses. He was often at Newmarket, whence he maintained a watchful eye upon an ambitious project for changing the parliamentary representation of the neighbouring University. "Jack Townshend," (so Lord Carlisle reported to Selwyn,) "meets with more success at Cambridge than was expected, but I have no idea that Administration can be beat where there are so many parsons. Charles is sanguine; but that he sometimes is when reason and cool sense cannot support him." All the same, when the general election arrived, the event showed that Charles was right. His peregrinations in the course of that busy twelvemonth were on such a scale that his friends were at a loss to conjecture where he found money to pay for his post-horses. "Charles," said Lord Carlisle, "tells me that he has not now, nor has had for some time, one guinea, and is happier on that account." The inner secrets of his financial transactions were disclosed to nobody except to Richard Fitzpatrick, as may be learned from certain passages in their mutual correspondence which do not tend to edification. None the less, before another year had elapsed, the empty pockets of Charles Fox aroused the cupidity of an unlucky highwayman who apparently took him for a portly and solvent citizen, with no liking or aptitude for a personal encounter. His prowess on that occasion, which was quite in character, established his popularity among the very numerous class of people who, whenever they started on an expedition in chaise or saddle, were haunted and pre-occupied by the terrors of the road.

Then came the County Meetings; and the young

champion, with a group of experienced strategists to advise him, and a host of devoted followers to back him, flung himself with renewed ardour into the thickest of the fray. The agitation for economy and reform acquired strength and impetus during the opening weeks of the year 1780; and on the second of February, — at the exact point of time when the centre of interest was transferred from provincial towns and cities to the floor of Parliament, — a public meeting, of dimensions hitherto unknown in England, was convoked in Westminster Hall, which the citizens of Westminster still occasionally used as a place of assembly for the transaction of their local business. The Opposition claimed that a surprisingly large proportion of the fifteen thousand electors of the borough were gathered together beneath that famous roof; but any veteran of the platform, who has been accustomed to amuse himself during the duller moments of a public meeting by making a rough computation of the numbers in front of him, will distrust the estimate of enthusiastic partisans.

A very large gathering, however, it undoubtedly was; and the whole space in that vast chamber, over which the human voice could reach, was covered by a sea of eager faces. The daïs was crowded with Townshends, and Grenvilles, and Bentincks, and Cavendishes; Charles Fox took the Chair; and a petition, framed on the same lines as the Address of the Yorkshire Freeholders, was moved by Alderman Sawbridge, and seconded by John Wilkes. Two passages in the Chairman's speech may still be read in full. He commented with unfeigned indignation upon the attempt made by Lord North and his colleagues to find a respectable precedent for their own extravagance and profusion. When defeat, (he said,) and shame, and dismay, pursued them in every quarter, — when their efforts grew weak and languid in proportion as their expenses increased, — they were led by curiosity, as well as by concern, to enquire into the financial history of the past; and they ascertained to their satisfaction that Mr. Pitt, in the

height of the Seven Years' War, had spent almost as much public money as themselves. "It was indecent," cried Fox, "for Ministers to charge the ever memorable Earl of Chatham with the only blemish that can be discovered in his character, without at the same time associating with his extravagance his wisdom, his exertions, and, above all, his success." The speech was crowned with a peroration which, according to the lifelong habit of that most workman-like of debaters, kept the argument continuous and unbroken up to the moment when he resumed his seat. "Do not," he said, "be deterred by the word 'Associations.' There is nothing unconstitutional in the term. With Associations you have it always in your power to maintain the independence in which you were born, and to compel the body whom you have entrusted with your rights to do you justice. Without Associations you must fall a sacrifice to that corruption which has given the Crown an influence unknown to any former period in our history. Permit this influence to be increased, and the country will be enslaved. Destroy it, and the English Constitution will never be overthrown." It was some time, according to the testimony of the reporters, before the necessary silence was recovered "owing to the heartfelt and vehement expression of the audience, quickened and impelled by the powerful eloquence of the gentleman who had just addressed them." When tranquillity was restored Mr. Fox was proposed, and acclaimed, as the Opposition candidate for Westminster; and he signified his acceptance of the offer. If he could have foreseen the troubles and vexations which his connection with that constituency drew down upon him in no distant future even Charles Fox might have thought twice before committing himself to an irrevocable decision.

The growing intensity of political feeling once more brought into prominence an ugly feature in the manners of the day. At ordinary times a large amount of common sense, and good nature, underlay the noise and roughness of our parliamentary proceedings. But none

the less a public man was always liable to be involved in a duel; and, in that thorough-going generation, the English duel was not a sham encounter. There is still in existence a most curious list of the fatal casualties that occurred during the war with our revolted Colonies. According to this record, which is drawn up with much care and accuracy, two hundred and forty-seven officers of the Royal army and navy were killed in American battle, and no fewer than twenty-nine in private duel.

Among Lord North's supporters in the House of Commons was a certain William Fullarton, an Ayrshire landed proprietor, who had responded handsomely to the call which the War Office made upon the patriotism of the country after the disaster at Saratoga. He had raised a battalion of infantry at his own expense, and largely from among his own tenants, and had been duly rewarded with a Lieutenant-colonelcy in the regular army. It so happened that the Earl of Shelburne entertained a strong objection, on public grounds, to the practice of conferring high military rank upon untried civilians; and he commented in the House of Lords upon Colonel Fullarton's claims and antecedents in sharp, and, (as it turned out,) in most undeserved terms of depreciation.[1] Conscious of merit, and hot and headstrong by nature, Fullarton brought his personal grievance to the notice of the House of Commons in a speech which violated the most elementary usages of Parliament, and which positively bristled with improprieties of language. Fox called him to order for referring to the Earl of Shelburne by name, and for charging that nobleman with deliberate falsehood. Rigby struck in on the one side, and Colonel Barré, who was quite as far removed from a peacemaker as Rigby, on the other; and the whole chamber was soon in a ferment which called for the intervention of the Prime Minister. North was seen at his very best on such occasions. He com-

[1] Colonel Fullarton soon had an opportunity for displaying remarkable military capacity in a campaign against the forces of Hyder Ali, and Tippoo Saib, in the East Indies.

plimented Fullarton on his martial spirit, and excused his vehemence; but he strongly recommended his own rule of treating hostile criticisms, uttered in another place, with indifference and disdain. Noble Lords, (said North,) were apt to be extremely personal in their remarks about members of the House of Commons, and some of them had a habit of making very free with himself. An epithet, for instance, had lately been applied to him which he had altogether refused to view as an affront, because a moment's consideration reminded him that a certain Noble Lord, "who had dubbed him 'a thing called a Minister,' would not have the smallest objection to become that very thing himself."

It was impossible to continue wrangling in face of a rebuke sweetened by so much wit, and such good temper. The matter dropped, and the House proceeded to business; but on the following day the entire speech which Fullarton had intended to deliver, but was not permitted to finish, appeared in the columns of the Public Advertiser. Lord Shelburne's course of action was described in the printed report as mendacious, insolent, and cowardly; and he was openly charged with being in treasonable correspondence with the enemies of his country. Fullarton sent a servant to Shelburne's house with a copy of the newspaper, and a verbal message demanding an immediate answer. London opinion was prepared to condemn and resent an insult offered by a much younger man, of no great mark in the world, to a peer who had been a Secretary of State under Lord Chatham, and who himself belonged to the class from which Prime Ministers are drawn. It was a case where Shelburne need not have allowed himself to be dragooned into a quarrel; but in earlier days he had been a brave soldier who had fought his way, from grade to grade, up to that rank in the army which Fullarton had attained at a single bound; and he had a soldier's feeling about giving and accepting a challenge. Without a moment's hesitation he sent down word to Fullarton's servant that there was no answer, except

that he desired his master to meet him in Hyde Park at five o'clock the next morning. Shelburne came attended by Lord Frederick Cavendish, his former brother in arms in the German war; while Fullarton brought with him Lord Balcarres, who, in the final battle on Bemis's Heights, had rivalled Benedict Arnold in courage and conduct. Two shots were exchanged without effect; but at the second fire Fullarton, aiming to kill, wounded his adversary slightly in the groin. Balcarres and Cavendish, who were authoritative judges of what honour required, thereupon insisted that the duel should stop, although Shelburne haughtily and firmly declined to go through the form of a reconciliation.[1]

Lord Shelburne's affair had been preceded by another political duel which was even more sensational, and which came nearer still to a fatal issue. William Adam, like Colonel Fullarton, was a Scotch country gentleman, of Maryburgh, in the County of Kinross. His father was the eldest among those four celebrated brothers who earned the gratitude of their own, and succeeding, generations by their skill and taste in the arts of domestic architecture and ornament. He himself was one of the two members representing the two electors of Gatton, in Surrey. It was a position which allowed him to have a free hand in the House of Commons; and, during the earlier sessions of the existing parliament, he voted frequently against the Ministry. A good fellow as ever breathed, he possessed the same kindly nature as his grandson of the same name, — that Sir William Adam whose patient and disinterested exertions contributed so much to the success of his party in the general election of 1880, and who is still remembered with affection by his surviving associates and opponents.

[1] Lady Shelburne was in the room when Colonel Fullarton's letter was put into her husband's hands, but she was kept in ignorance of its contents. "She did not," said a newspaper, "know a word of the affair till it was entirely over. It was her brother, the Honourable Mr. Fitzpatrick, who broke it to her. She was expecting." Such was indeed the case. The great Lord Lansdowne, the political patron of Macaulay, and, (in his later life,) of Robert Lowe, was born in the July after the duel.

Earl Russell who, when a student at Edinburgh University, must have known Mr. Adam well, (for that gentleman lived to the age of eighty-seven,) describes him as endowed with an "openness of temper, and cordiality of disposition, which peculiarly suited Mr. Fox." But the friendship between the two men had a stormy, and most inauspicious, beginning. When Parliament assembled for the Winter Session of November 1779 Ministers were very hard put to it in the debate on the Address; and they were not a little comforted when Mr. Adam announced that it was his intention to desert the Minority, and support the Cabinet. The reasons which he gave for adopting that course were not flattering to either of the two parties. He frankly admitted that the Government had failed miserably; but he confided to the House that, among those gentlemen who stood as candidates for office, he could not single out one by whom the State was likely to be better guided than by its present rulers. He beheld, (he said,) a political phenomenon, — an unsuccessful Ministry, and a discredited Opposition. Fox who, as he well might, resented a speech so insulting to himself and his allies, descended upon Adam with the sweep and force of a tornado. "I do not know," he exclaimed, "how the Government will receive this awkward and paradoxical tribute; but I know very well what would happen if I myself were a Minister, and if a man were to approach me, and say: 'Sir, I cannot defend you on the ground of your conduct, which is so replete with absurdities and inconsistencies that all my abilities cannot palliate them. But I will tell you what I can do to serve you. I will inform the world that the men who oppose you are more ignorant, and more inconsistent, than yourself.' I for my part, on hearing such an address, should instantly reply: 'Begone, wretch, who delightest in libelling mankind, and insulting him, whom you profess to defend, by saying to his face that he certainly is infamous, but there are others more infamous still.'" Nothing, it must be allowed, could less resemble the language

which Lord North was in the habit of employing towards members of the Opposition who came to him with a proffer of their support.

Adam was distressed and shocked at being exhibited as a monster of depravity to an amused and excited audience, with no section of which, at that moment, he himself was in political agreement. He called Fox to account in a quiet and dignified letter, and begged him to inform the public, through the press, that he had not meant "to throw any personal reflection upon Mr. Adam." Fox, — who knew that there would be no end to it if he once began apologising, under pressure, to the victims of his rhetoric, — replied that he was unwilling to put anything into the newspapers relating to a speech which, in his view, required no explanation whatever. A meeting in Hyde Park was accordingly arranged for Monday the twenty-ninth of November. The tragical part of the business, in Charles Fox's estimation, was over and done with when he had been successfully extracted from his warm bed by candle-light on a winter's morning. He was accompanied on to the ground by Richard Fitzpatrick; while Adam chose as his second Colonel Humberston, of the family of Seaforth and Mackenzie, who shortly afterwards met his death in the wildest of Mahratta battles. The distance was measured off at fourteen paces. Colonel Fitzpatrick, as in duty bound, instructed his cousin to stand sideways, protecting his exposed flank with his pistol-arm, in the stiff and constrained attitude portrayed in contemporary engravings of famous duels. But Fox would have none of it. He was as thick, (he said,) one way as the other; and he planted himself, full and square, in face of his antagonist. His life, in all human probability, was saved by his careless and offhand courage. When shots had been exchanged, with no result that was visible to Mr. Adam or the two colonels, an attempt was made to reconcile the opponents; but Fox remarked calmly that it was no place for apologies. After Adam had taken one more shot Fox discharged

his pistol in the air, and made his peace with a few well-chosen words. Then, but not till then, he told the others that he believed himself to have been wounded at the first fire. He had, in truth, been hit in the very centre of his body. The bullet had struck the buckle of his waist-band, — which, in the case of Charles Fox, was necessarily an article of solid construction, — and had dropped to the ground after inflicting an insignificant, and not very painful, contusion. "Of all duels," wrote Horace Walpole, "this was the most perfect. So much temper, sense, propriety, and natural good nature, on a base of firmness and spirit, never were assembled."[1]

The news of what had taken place in Hyde Park was all over London by breakfast-time. "Half the town was reading the correspondence in Charles Fox's room the whole morning." His innumerable friends had been exceedingly anxious; and for some while to come they were very angry. When Lord Shelburne's duel supervened on the top of Charles Fox's a most unpleasant suspicion began to pervade society. People recalled the bloodthirsty pertinacity with which, in days not very remote, the life of Wilkes was sought by duellists who, in two cases out of three, were Scotchmen.[2] "You have seen," (wrote Horace Walpole,) "Mr. Fox's combat with highwaymen in the papers. At first I concluded they were not highwaymen, but Highlanders, and that Messrs. Adam and Fullarton were ambitious of further preferment." An anonymous journalist, writing with savage irony, pretended to have read a War Office advertisement for a number of marks-

[1] A brief and precise statement of all that occurred was drawn up for publication, and signed by both of the seconds. Fox, according to oral tradition, told Adam that he must have loaded with "Government powder," the strength and efficacy of which had recently been impugned in parliamentary debate. But there is no printed or written authority for the story; and it is perhaps too good to be true.

[2] The man who nearly killed Wilkes, in a barbarous and cold-blooded encounter which came little short of an attempt at murder, was probably an Englishman; but he was a dependant of Lord Bute, and an officer in the Princess Dowager's Household.

men who had been regularly trained, and were sure of hitting within twelve feet distance; "and who may rely upon it that they will not be sent abroad, as they are destined for home service."[1] That imputation was most unjust as regarded Adam; and Fullarton, at the worst, was a quarrelsome man with an exaggerated idea of his own importance.

On the twenty-second of March 1780 Sir James Lowther brought the matter before the House of Commons; and that House has often been invited to consider points of Privilege which concerned it less. "He by no means," (so he assured his hearers,) "wished to put men of spirit into a dishonourable situation. It had been his own misfortune, more than once, to be engaged in a duel; and, whenever he was so called upon, he trusted that he would show himself ready to do what was proper. But he now was speaking as a Member of Parliament, and an advocate for freedom of debate. If free debate were to be interpreted into personal attack, and questions of a public nature were to be decided in private combat, Parliament would soon resemble a Polish Diet." William Adam then rose to his feet. The attention of the House was immediately fixed upon him; and, before he sat down, he had regained the sympathy and good-will of all his parliamentary colleagues. "Amidst the unwelcome sensations," (he said,) "occasioned by the revival of that unfortunate affair in which he himself had been implicated, he found some comfort in the opportunity afforded him of doing justice to the character of his opponent, and of asserting in the hearing of so respectable an assembly that he had found in him a manliness, and an honour, which equalled those transcendant abilities that had won him the admiration of every member of the House, and of none in a more eminent degree than himself." Fox, being what he was, in all likelihood never received a compliment which afforded him more lively pleasure.

[1] *London Evening Post* of March 1780.

The Coalition of 1783, which brought ruin and disaster upon so many politicians, proved nothing less than a God-send to William Adam; for it enabled him to reconcile his loyalty towards Lord North with his affection for Charles Fox, whose staunch and devoted adherent he became, and remained, until the death of his beloved chief absolved him from his allegiance.

Fox's speech in Westminster Hall was the crowning event of the agitation in the country; and by that time both Houses were filling up fast after a substantial Christmas holiday which almost everybody had further prolonged on his own account. The honour of opening a parliamentary campaign, marked by striking and diversified turns of fortune, and overcharged with historical interest, was claimed by a man admirably fitted for the responsibility which he had undertaken. The Earl of Shelburne was a statesman endowed with strong character, and rare talents, marred by faults which impaired his usefulness when alive, and which have rendered him vast disservice with posterity. He laboured, and his memory still labours, beneath an imputation of duplicity and disingenuousness for which it is not altogether easy to account. Shelburne's political alliances were seldom long-lived, and a cloud of discomfort and distrust was apt to overspread the serenity of his private friendships. At an age which in modern politics passes for youth he had twice held exalted office, and in both cases his relations with his Cabinet colleagues had begun by being strained, and had ended by being internecine. But the most notable example of his constitutional inability to work harmoniously and amicably with others was still in the future. Those mutual suspicions and jealousies, which smouldered, or blazed up, between Lord Shelburne and Charles Fox while they were Secretaries of State together in Lord Rockingham's second administration, were destined to produce results more important and far-reaching than anything which ever

happened, before or since, in the history of British party. Fox's obstinate refusal to serve under Shelburne, after Rockingham had been removed by death, led to a succession of consequences which altered the whole course of politics, and condemned the Whigs to an all but unbroken half-century of banishment from place and power. It was the fatal and irreparable mistake of Fox's life. A quiet member of the Whig party, who was more concerned about the welfare of his cause than about the ambitions and susceptibilities of his leaders, might have been pardoned for thinking that it would have been no such terrible calamity if either Colonel Fullarton's, or Mr. Adam's, pistol had carried the bullet home.

With all his defects and angularities Lord Shelburne was a public man of the first order, to whose very valuable qualities the world has done scanty justice. He has been cleverly, and not inaptly, described by Mr. Disraeli as one of the suppressed characters of English history. Throughout the entire period covered by the American difficulty Shelburne was a power in the State, — a scourge to the ineptitude, and a spur to the indolence, of its rulers. He had been the most troublesome and restless of bedfellows in office, but the independence and isolation of Opposition were pre-eminently suited to his self-willed and self-reliant nature. His acquaintance with affairs was deep and wide; his judgment was almost unerring; and he never shrank from taking a bold and direct line of his own, which other men, if they chose, were at liberty to follow. Shelburne was actuated by the instinctive patriotism of a genuine aristocrat, who identified himself with the prosperity and honour of a nation in which he held an assured and conspicuous position. He was versed in European diplomacy, and in the military administration of our own, and other, countries; but his special strength lay in a familiar acquaintance with the principles and details of finance. He belonged to that very small class of politicians who refuse to apply two methods, and two

measures, to the management of their private property, and to the care which they bestow upon the public income and expenditure. Shelburne was an open-handed giver, and he never failed to maintain the standard of well-ordered splendour in which it became a nobleman to live. But he had a practical and first-hand knowledge of his own affairs. He supervised the control of his estates in England and Ireland, and of his establishments in town and country, on a system of exact and rational economy; and he put in practice the same system, and no other, when dealing with the pecuniary interests of the nation. "He retained," we are told, "three or four clerks in constant pay and employment under his own roof, who were solely occupied in copying State papers and accounts;" and he had at his elbow no less capable an adviser than Doctor Richard Price, who was among the best informed, and most sober-minded, political economists of the age.

On the eighth of February 1780 Shelburne moved for the appointment of a Committee consisting of members of both Houses who possessed neither employment nor pension, to examine without delay into the Public Expenditure, and the mode of accounting for the same; to report upon the manner of making Government contracts; and to consider the expediency of abolishing all offices, old and new, which had no duties attached to them, of curtailing exorbitant salaries, and of applying the money thereby saved "to lessen the present ruinous expenditure, and carry on the present war against the House of Bourbon." The words of the Resolution had the true ring about them; and the orator, — for, when he had his heart in the matter, a genuine orator Shelburne was, — explained his proposal to the House of Lords in a speech of considerable but not superfluous length, and of exceptional knowledge and power. He understood his subject, and he thoroughly knew his audience. He did not even attempt to convince those among his hearers who made a trade of politics. Ignoring the whole flock of Court officials, and holders and expectants

of sinecures and pensions, and Barons desirous of being made Viscounts, and Bishops on the watch for a chance of being translated, he addressed his arguments to those independent noblemen who attended Parliament, not for the purpose of pushing their own fortunes, but in the hope of doing something towards saving the nation from imminent disaster, and only too probable ruin. Close and eager attention was paid to his searching analysis of the fiscal situation in its bearing upon the future of the landed interest. Shelburne gave it as his opinion that the country gentlemen of England would never have sanctioned the American policy of the Ministry if they could have foreseen that they were committing the British Treasury to an expenditure which would eventually lead to the mortgaging of their own estates in perpetuity; inasmuch as it was upon them, and upon their heirs after them, that, in one shape or another, the burden of taxation must ultimately lie. His Majesty's Government, (he said,) was now fighting four simultaneous wars on borrowed money. Every successive twelvemonth was more costly, and every successive loan was made on worse terms, than the last; and nothing could in the end avert an overwhelming financial calamity except a general peace, "of which, (he greatly feared,) there was not the most distant prospect." This gloomy anticipation was corroborated by "an affirmative and significant nod" from Lord Sandwich, who was seated on the front bench opposite with a score of proxies in his pocket; and it was a piece of by-play which did not fail to impress the House. What remained of the debate added little to the effect of Shelburne's speech, and detracted nothing from it. When the question was put to the vote his Resolution was supported by twenty Earls and Marquises, and eight Dukes, although Earls and Dukes were less plentiful then than now.

The Opposition lords, — encouraged by the adhesion of some among their brother peers who hitherto had been supporters, or even members, of the Government,

— had done their duty well and manfully. They had protested, as citizens, against a policy by the consequences of which they were at least as gravely affected as any other class of Englishmen. But the House of Commons was the special and ordained arena for financial debate; and the self-appointed champion of the nation's financial interests, whose hands the County petitions had been designed to strengthen, sat, and to the end of his career continued to sit, in that assembly. On the eleventh of February 1780, before an overflowing and profoundly attentive audience, Mr. Burke unfolded his Plan for the better Security of the Independence of Parliament, and the Economical Reformation of the Civil and other Establishments. That plan was embodied in five separate Bills, which their author explained in an oration of the length demanded by the importance and complexity of his subject. It was a plan, (to use his own stately words,) laid not in official formality, nor in airy speculation, but in real life, and in human nature. It was a plan which weakened no function of Government, but on the contrary gave it greater vigour. It provided the Minister of Finance with the means of orderly method and comprehensive foresight. It extinguished secret corruption almost to the impossibility of its existence. It destroyed "direct and visible influence equal to the offices of at least fifty members of Parliament; and, lastly, it secured that the provision made by the nation for the comfort and dignity of His Majesty, and His Majesty's family, should not be diverted to the political purposes of the Minister. These," said Burke, "are the points on which I rely for the merit of the plan. I pursue economy in a secondary view, and only as it is connected with these great objects." Burke, nevertheless, confidently promised that his scheme of retrenchment would restore to the public Exchequer, in hard cash, a sum of between two and three hundred thousand pounds a year; while the system of account and control which he proposed to institute would be in itself, to all future time, "a great

revenue." During the last years of peace, which immediately preceded the American rebellion, the expenditure of the country, exclusive of the interest on the Debt, had stood somewhere near the figure of five millions annually. A proportional reduction from the so-called peace budgets of our own day, — if another Edmund Burke were to arise in the present House of Commons, — might fairly be computed at seven millions a year; and seven millions a year would be no contemptible saving.

Burke's speech, like his speech on the Conciliation of America, has taken rank in our national literature on a level with Bacon's Essays, and Milton's Areopagitica, and the first quarto volume of Gibbon's History. No oration, however skilfully edited and corrected, can please and satisfy a reader if it failed to delight and impress the hearers who were present at its delivery; and the reception accorded to Edmund Burke's exposition of his plan of Economical Reform was of a nature which left him nothing to desire. An immense crowd of members sat and stood, listening, and learning, and enjoying while he rolled out his vivid and picturesque, but most accurate and businesslike, catalogue of financial abuses, and while he descanted upon their intimate relation to the good fame and efficiency of Parliament. He earnestly besought the House to adopt a self-denying ordinance on an extensive scale; to abolish unearned, and to dock half-earned, salaries and pensions; and thereby to withdraw from all Cabinets, then and afterwards, the material means of corruption and illegitimate influence. That, in Burke's view, was the only course of action which could re-establish Parliament in the esteem and confidence of the nation. It was idle, (he said,) to complain of the language which had been used at some of the County meetings. "We are told that the petitioners were violent. Be it so. Those who are least anxious about your conduct are not those who love you the most. We have furnished to the people of England, — indeed we have, — some real cause for jeal-

ousy. Let us free ourselves at once from everything that can increase their suspicions, and inflame their just resentment. Let the Commons in Parliament assembled be one and the same thing with the Commons at large. Then indeed shall we be truly great. Respecting ourselves, we shall be respected by the world."

After holding his audience during more than three hours he wound up what he had to say with a few unadorned sentences, pitched in a quiet strain; and, when Edmund Burke spoke calmly and simply under the stress of deep emotion, his words always possessed a strange and mysterious charm. The House remained spell-bound. Fox took off his hat to second the motion. North, embarrassed, and a great deal more than half-convinced, stated it as his belief that no other gentleman could have been equal to the task so ably performed by the Honourable Member, "although he had the happiness to know that there were many then present who had very brilliant parts." For himself, he certainly should not hinder the bringing in of the first among the five Bills; but he expressly reserved his liberty to oppose it at one or another of its subsequent stages. Lord George Gordon, the vainest of fools, who had all the will in the world to be mischievous, thought fit to attack Burke's speech as unconstitutional. He saw most plainly, (so he declared,) that the whole business was a juggle concerted between the worthy Member for Bristol, and the noble Lord in the blue ribbon at the head of the Government; and, to the disgust of all his colleagues, he insisted on challenging a vote. The Noes were ordered to keep their seats; while the crowd of Ayes, — according to the clumsy arrangement for taking a division which prevailed then, and for more than fifty years afterwards, — packed themselves with difficulty into the dark and comfortless Lobby. Lord George who, to the credit of Parliament, could not secure a teller, remained behind in the solitude of an empty House. Burke's speech was printed and published, and ran through several editions. There is agreeable testimony to the effect

which it produced upon a mind that was well worth convincing. William Cowper had recently been engaged upon a rhymed piece of political satire, one stanza of which, neither better nor worse than the rest of the poem, was evidently directed against Edmund Burke. Towards the end of February Cowper despatched to his friend William Unwin a letter which contained the following passage. "When I wrote last I was a little inclined to send you a copy of verses entitled 'The Modern Patriot,' but was not quite pleased with a line or two, which I found it difficult to mend. At night I read Mr. Burke's speech in the newspaper, and was so well pleased with his proposals for a reformation, and with the temper in which he made them, that I began to think better of his cause, and burnt my verses."

Burke's oration was an arsenal of facts and statistics which provided his followers with an abundant store of weapons for waging as hot a parliamentary campaign as ever was fought between two hosts of combatants not unequally matched in number; for the Ministerial majority, which had stood at two hundred in the first Session of the existing Parliament, had by this time as good as disappeared. A few days afterwards Sir George Savile moved for an account of all Patent Places for life, or lives, and for the salaries and fees thereto attached; as well as of all pensions granted by the Crown, specifying the amount of such pensions, and the times when, and the persons to whom, they had been granted. It was notorious that such a Return would have disclosed the names of many Peers and Commoners, and the female relatives of many others, who were gratified by quarterly doles of money which might at any moment be withdrawn at the pleasure of the Sovereign. Lord Nugent, as spokesman for the Ministry, resisted the motion on the ground of delicacy; and in the course of two long discussions no more plausible argument could be discovered for withholding information which Parliament was indubitably entitled to receive. "There were," said Lord Nugent, "many Lady Bridgets, Lady

Marys, and Lady Jennies, who would be much hurt at having their names entered in the proceedings of that House as pensioners of State." Lord Nugent's appeal was received with derision, and the general feeling was such that Lord North found himself obliged to come in person to the rescue. He interposed an amendment limiting the scope, while it did not directly traverse the substance, of Savile's Resolution; but all the authority of the Prime Minister, together with a speech of marvellous wit and fire from Mr. Attorney General Wedderburn, were required in order to save the Government from disaster by a majority of two votes in a House of three hundred and eighty members. Those figures indicated a sudden and significant displacement of the political balance.

There was another class of people who were more unpopular even than the pensioners and sinecurists. Government contractors, — with their brand-new wealth, and their privileged opportunities for facile, and in many cases ill-gotten, gains, — had no friends in any quarter; and the most disliked and suspected among them were those who had seats in the House of Commons. For the contractor, on the one hand, was bound to obey the Minister for fear of losing his contract; while the Minister submitted to the exactions, and winked at the peculations, of the contractor for fear of losing a vote. Honest senators, without distinction of party, were resolutely determined to do away with an abuse which was incompatible with effective administrative control, and a stain upon the honour of Parliament. A Bill for Restraining any Member of the House of Commons from being concerned in any Government Contract, "unless the said Contract had been made at a public bidding," was carried rapidly, silently, and unanimously through all its stages; and Lord North recognised that it would be highly imprudent to court rebuff in a Chamber where he felt that power was slipping from him. The Contractors Bill went up to the House of Lords; and the Ministers, with much ado, and some scandal, contrived

to defeat it in that smaller and more manageable assembly.

Burke had seldom been heard to greater advantage than during the debates on the separate provisions of his Bill for the better Regulation of His Majesty's Civil Establishments. On the thirteenth of March the Committee reached a Clause dealing with the Lords of Trade, who were eight in number, all of them with seats in Parliament, and each of them drawing a salary of a thousand pounds a year. There was a tradition of long standing that the claims of literature were not to be neglected in making appointments to the Board of Trade. Locke had sat there, and Addison, and Prior, — and Charles Townshend, whose vivacious drollery had never been more unbridled than when he was enlarging on the farcical character of his duties as a Commissioner of Trade and Plantations. Lord North, to do him justice, had placed upon the Board as presentable a show of authors as he could find in the ranks of his parliamentary supporters. The patriarch among them was Mr. Soame Jenyns, who was almost co-æval with the century. He had written much in prose and verse; but he is chiefly known by the title, rather than by the contents, of his principal work, "A Free Enquiry into the Nature and Origin of Evil." Among the other Commissioners was Lord Carlisle, the smallest of poets, or poetasters; Mr. William Eden, whose qualification to be classed as a literary man consisted in certain "Letters on Public Affairs," in defence of the Government, which were addressed to Lord Carlisle; and Edward Gibbon, whose nomination as a Lord of Trade did something to excuse and dignify the most flagrant and grotesque of existing jobs.[1] Burke approached the subject in a spirit of high comedy. He professed a desire to rescue a company

[1] "The fancy of a hostile orator," said Gibbon, "may paint in the strong colours of ridicule 'the perpetual adjournments, and the unbroken vacation,' of the Board of Trade. But it must be allowed that our duty was not intolerably severe, and that I enjoyed many days, and weeks, of repose without being called away from my library to the office."

of eminent writers from dry and irksome functions which distracted them from loftier studies, and more congenial labours. As an Academy of *Belles Lettres*, (he said,) he held them hallowed. As a Board of Trade he wished to abolish them. That Board, to his view, was a crow's nest in which nightingales were kept prisoners: and his design was to restore the nightingales to their liberty in the hope that they might sing the more delightfully. Aroused by the sympathy and applause of his audience, which has often inspired lesser men, Burke positively revelled in the freedom and license of Committee. He spoke as often as he chose, and each successive apologist for the Board of Trade was overwhelmed by the exuberance of his diction and imagination, and by the irresistible play of his satire. "I can never," (so Gibbon confessed,) "forget the delight with which that diffusive and ingenious orator was heard by all sides of the House, and even by those whose existence he proscribed. The Lords of Trade blushed at their own insignificancy; and Mr. Eden's appeal to the two thousand five hundred volumes of our Reports served only to excite a general laugh." At a quarter past two in the morning the Committee at length divided, and voted for abolishing the Board by two hundred and seven as against a hundred and ninety-nine.

Burke had exhorted men of all parties to lay aside their differences, and address themselves in common to the salutary work of lightening the burden of taxation, and restoring the purity of the national senate; and he had met with a response which surprised himself, and the statesmen with whom he acted. A change had come over the surface of politics which indicated that the public mind was stirred by an under-current of deep and sincere conviction. The leaders of the Opposition could henceforward rely upon the unbounded enthusiasm of their habitual followers, and they might likewise count on the support of a large contingent of new allies.

Encouraged by success, they determined to push the great controversy of their generation towards a decisive issue. Hitherto they had been engaged in storming the outworks, and they now proceeded to attack the citadel itself. The moment was ripe, in their opinion, for eliciting from the House of Commons a solemn protest against the encroachments of royal influence upon the accepted theory, and the long-established working, of the Constitution. John Dunning, the first of living advocates, was entrusted with the conduct of the business; and it could not have been placed in more appropriate hands. He had made his way into the front rank of his profession through a course of that poverty and hardship to which strong men, who have succeeded in life, look back with honourable pride and satisfaction. The Earl of Chatham, who did not love gentlemen of the long robe, had declared that Dunning was something very superior to a mere lawyer, although at the same time his legal knowledge was such that he was "the law itself." Chatham made him his Solicitor General; and, after Chatham had gone into retirement, and his Ministry, — ostensibly led by the Duke of Grafton, but in reality impelled and guided by the more unscrupulous of the Bedford party, — had embarked upon a violent and unconstitutional policy, Dunning found himself altogether out of sympathy with his colleagues. He returned to his private practice at the Bar, where he thenceforward maintained a pre-eminence, both at Equity and Common Law, which no one presumed, or, (such was the respect felt for his character and his attainments,) even desired to dispute. George the Third's dislike of him was notorious; and no Minister, of the moral type which under that monarch was the indispensable qualification for office, ventured so much as to suggest that John Dunning ought in justice and decency to be made a King's Counsel. And so, for twelve years to come, there was witnessed the unusual spectacle of a barrister who, but for his own scruples, might long ago have been Lord Chancellor, pleading in a stuff gown before the

tribunal of England's greatest Judge; and Lord Mansfield honoured Dunning with a deference and consideration which reflected even greater honour upon Lord Mansfield himself. Dunning, throughout all those years, held a commanding position in Parliament, where he sat for the borough of Calne, free from trouble, anxiety, and expense, with Barré for his colleague; for Lord Shelburne, like his son and grandson after him, made a discriminating use of his electoral influence.

On the sixth of April 1780 the House of Commons resolved itself into a Committee to consider the Petitions from the County Meetings, and Dunning took that opportunity for bringing forward two stringent Resolutions aimed against the excessive power of the Court. The debate which ensued was signalised by no very rare display of eloquence; but it was rendered memorable by the supreme importance of the topic, and by the succession of extraordinary incidents which occurred in a House packed to suffocation, and boiling over with excitement. Dunning's speech, plain-spoken and powerfully argued, wrought an effect upon his hearers which obviously and imperatively necessitated an immediate reply from a responsible Minister; but the oratorical resources possessed by the Government for meeting such an emergency had by this time fallen very low indeed. When the House of Commons wanted persuading and convincing it was utterly useless to put up either Rigby or Lord George Germaine. Welbore Ellis was a nonentity; and, though Dundas and Wedderburn were both of them admirable debaters, they were more esteemed for their talents than for their character. Moreover they were Crown Lawyers; and the country gentlemen of those days preferred to be told what they ought to do by one of themselves. There remained the Earl of Nugent, a Vice Treasurer of Ireland, who more than once had been selected to defend the Ministry during those critical discussions upon Economical Reform. Nugent was a jolly, rollicking Irishman, very rich indeed in acres and money, who had made the most of a world

which liked him rather more than it respected him.[1] He spoke well, as such men speak; and his speeches are still readable, if it were only for the sake of the flashes of indiscretion by which, at one point or another of their progress, they were pretty sure to be enlivened. In his reply to Dunning Nugent contrived to hit upon an argument which convulsed the House with wonder and amusement. "Could any gentleman," (he demanded,) "lay his hand upon his heart, and declare that this was peculiarly the time which called for the diminution of the influence of the Crown? America was lost. He would speak out. He was willing to repeat his words. He feared that America was irretrievably lost. The American war had proved a wrong measure. He himself had supported the war, and he was not ashamed to own that he had been in the wrong. But after a series of failures, and disappointments, and untoward accidents, followed by a war with France, and closely followed again by a war with Spain, with great loans, and heavy taxes, to contend that the influence of the Crown ought to be diminished was, in his opinion, to the last degree preposterous." Any one who has sat in the House of Commons may imagine for himself the chorus of ironical cheering with which each sentence of this blundering confession on the part of a Minister was greeted from the Opposition benches, and not from the Opposition benches only.

Lord Nugent had given away the case for the Government; and worse was still to follow. Some weeks previously a fierce quarrel had arisen between Lord North, and the Speaker of the House of Commons, over an obscure and rather painful question of personal interests.[2] During the Committee on Dunning's Resolu-

[1] Lord Nugent has won for himself a cheerful memory in literature as the donor of the Haunch of Venison which suggested Goldsmith's inimitable poem.

[2] *Parliamentary History;* XXI, 258–277. The part played by Fox upon this occasion was an instance of his skill in the management, — or, to speak more truly, the creation, — of a parliamentary opportunity.

tions Sir Fletcher Norton remained seated on a bench near the Chair as a private member. Long observation had taught him to read the pulse of the House; and he felt that an opportunity had at last arrived for paying off his arrear of grudges against the Cabinet and the Court. Rising in his place he began with what the Ministry might well regard as an hypocritical expression of reluctance to take sides in a party controversy. But he soon warmed to his work; and, at the close of a slashing speech in favour of the motion, he wound up by declaring that the people of England, "in their constituent and collective capacity," had a full right to petition the House, and were entitled to redress if they put forward their grievances in a peaceable and constitutional manner. "The Committee," he said, "must either agree with the Resolution, or at once reject the petitions; and, if there were any gentlemen present who felt themselves moved to adopt the latter course, he wished them joy in going down to their Constituents after having voted the allegations made by many thousands of the people of England to be false and ill-founded." The intervention of the Speaker was not to the taste of fair-minded men; but his bellicose and dictatorial language intimidated waverers into voting against the Government, and removed all sense of restraint from the younger hot-heads of the Opposition.

When it came to the Prime Minister's turn to speak he was no longer in his usual placid temper. He had suffered much while he was being attacked by Sir Fletcher Norton, and still more while he was being defended by Lord Nugent; he scented defeat in the air; and he looked forward to a very unpleasant interview with his royal master at an early hour on the morrow. He lost command of himself, and did not succeed in maintaining his hold upon that crowded and turbulent assembly. Lord North was betrayed by an access of vexation into asking whether he was justly chargeable as the author of the national misfortunes, "whereupon many gentlemen cried across the House, 'You are!

You are!'" The worst moment of a bad half-hour was when he upbraided the Opposition with pursuing measures likely to overturn the Constitution. He was called to order angrily and vociferously, and a number of members demanded that the Prime Minister's words should be taken down by the Clerk at the Table. The Lord Advocate, coming to the assistance of his leader, proposed an insignificant amendment on Dunning's first Resolution, in the double hope of confusing the issue, and of prolonging the discussion on the chance that something might be gained by delay.[1] Dundas was a master of parliamentary wiles, but he had to reckon with a more consummate tactician than himself; for Charles Fox instantly rose to his feet, and accepted the amendment with ominous alacrity. The Government had no choice but to proceed forthwith to a division; and a motion, couched in the words "That it is necessary to declare that the influence of the Crown has increased, is increasing, and ought to be diminished," was carried by two hundred and thirty-three votes to two hundred and fifteen. From that day forward the terms of Dunning's Resolution became a catchword in politics. Such a string of telling phrases never again captivated the fancy of the public until, in the Reform agitation of 1832, the country resounded to the cry of "The Bill, the whole Bill, and nothing but the Bill." The Government were supported by twenty-seven members for Cornish boroughs, and twenty-seven of the sham representatives for Scotland; while the majority contained only five of the one class, and six of the other. Above sixty English county members voted for the Resolution, and eight against it. There spoke the free voice of the true England.[2]

[1] *Parliamentary History;* XXI, 366. *The Lord Advocates of Scotland, by George W. T. Omond;* Volume II, page 99.

[2] Parodies on Dunning's Resolution, for a long time to come, were very fashionable in the newspapers. "That Lord George Gordon has been cracked, is cracked, and ought not to be allowed to go about." "That

Dunning's Resolution ranks in importance with the Petition of Rights, and the Declaration of Right, as an expression of the national opinion on the most vital of all constitutional questions; for it laid down the principle that the country should be ruled by Ministers who, — like Pitt, and Peel, and Palmerston and Gladstone, — depended, not on the favour of the Sovereign, but on the confidence of an unbought and unbribed Parliament. It was the death-wound of Personal Government, which thenceforward floundered and struggled helplessly until, after no long while, it perished and disappeared. Personal Government had endured for nearly twenty years, and had left a record as turbid and barren as any equal period in our history. There had been a protracted dearth of useful and beneficent legislation, while the attention of King George and his Ministers had been absorbed in the conduct of two undertakings the first of which had ended in ridiculous, and the second in ruinous, failure. They had brought the country to the brink of revolution in order to keep Wilkes out of Parliament: and now for six years past, Wilkes had been seated in Parliament securely and comfortably, enjoying a high popularity among his brother members, and occupying as a debater very much more than his due share of the public time. Such had been the issue of the contest over the Middlesex Election; and not less nugatory, and far more disastrous, was the attempt made by the King and the Cabinet to enforce their colonial policy upon the people of America. Already, ten months previously to the date of Dunning's Resolution, George the Third himself had admitted, in a confidential letter to the Prime Minister, that any man who alleged the Tea Duty to be worth all the evils which had arisen from it "was

General Conway has been a trimmer, is a trimmer, and ought to be trimmed." More than thirteen years afterwards poor Gibbon, jesting to the last, wrote to his friend Lord Sheffield that the cruel ailment, which was very soon to kill him, "had most stupendously increased, was increasing, and ought to be diminished."

more fit for Bedlam than for a seat in the Senate." That conclusion was exactly what Burke and Fox, before ever the American rebellion broke out, had tried to impress upon Parliament in the plainest of plain language.[1]

[1] *George the Third to Lord North;* Kew, June 11, 1779.

CHAPTER XX

THE GORDON RIOTS. THE GENERAL ELECTION.

THE Spring session of the year 1780 was "a session in which unexpected victories, and unaccountable defeats, alternately raised and sank the hopes of the contending parties from the highest pitch of exultation to the lowest state of despondency. The point of decision seemed more than once quivering, and hanging only by a hair."[1] Those are the words of a contemporary historian; and never was a more faithful description written. The Opposition leaders had hitherto been carried forward by a rush of headlong success; and they now were destined to experience the bitterness of unforeseen and, — for anything that appeared on the surface, — quite inexplicable repulses and misadventures.

On the fourteenth of April Sir Fletcher Norton informed Parliament that he had long been unwell, and that his health had at last entirely given way. He treated his hearers to a long narrative of his various maladies with a minuteness of detail testifying to the interest felt by an eighteenth century House of Commons in all that related to the symptoms of gout. The King believed him to be malingering. "I have not," said His Majesty, "the smallest doubt that the Speaker has pleaded illness to enable the Opposition to pursue their amusement at Newmarket next week." But Sir Fletcher Norton most assuredly was not shamming, inasmuch as his enforced absence from the Chair, (and well he knew it,) was the salvation of a Government which he cordially detested. "Nothing," it was said, "ever happened more fortunately for any Administration than the illness, at this peculiar juncture, of the Speaker of the House

[1] *History of Europe in the Annual Register for 1780;* towards the end of chapter 8.

of Commons." Lord North proposed and carried an adjournment over the next ten days, and during all that interval of time the subterranean operations of Mr. John Robinson, the Patronage Secretary of the Treasury, were pursued with a skill and an industry the results of which soon became evident. When the House re-assembled Dunning moved an Address praying that His Majesty would be graciously pleased not to prorogue the parliament until proper measures had been taken to correct the abuses complained of by the petitions of the people; and that motion was rejected by a majority of fifty votes in a House so large that the most sanguine opponent of the Ministry could not blind himself to the conviction that it must be regarded as a test division.

Charles Fox, beside himself with astonishment and vexation, poured forth, in an assembly seething with excitement little short of fury, a flood of declamation which has been described as "the keenest Philippic" that perhaps ever was spoken within those walls. "Philippic" was the right term to use, for no passage in the Second Oration against Antony exceeded in vehemence and pungency the ironical compliments which Fox paid to the habitual followers of the Government, and his crushing denunciations of those fickle senators who had supported Dunning on the first occasion, and had opposed him on the next. Fox exclaimed that he had no quarrel whatever with the two hundred and fifteen gentlemen who, on the sixth of the month, voted that the influence of the Crown had not increased, and ought not therefore to be diminished. *Their* conduct, (he said,) was open and direct, and all of a piece from first to last. They had sold themselves for office; but, base as the tenure of their places was, they had one virtue on which to pride themselves, — that of fidelity, gratitude, and consistency. To all their other demerits they had not added the absurdity and treachery of one day resolving an opinion to be true, and the next day of declaring it to be a falsehood. They had not taken in

their patron, or their friends, with false hopes and delusive promises. But when he contemplated another set of men who sat upon the benches around him, (and he was sorry for it,) — men who voted first one way, and then another, — he was at a loss for words to convey the sentiment with which he viewed them. Nevertheless, before Charles Fox finally resumed his seat, he had contrived to discover language strong enough to express his feelings; and he wound up the fourth speech he made on that afternoon and evening by telling those gentlemen that their conduct "amounted to a desertion and abandonment of their declared principles, and of their solemn promises plighted in that House to their constituents, and to the people at large; conduct which, when considered in that light, was scandalous, base, treacherous, shameful, and disgraceful." That fierce invective, delivered under the impulse of passion, and on the spur of the moment, was the eloquent objurgation of an angry orator rather than the grave and measured rebuke which should have issued from the lips of a responsible party leader. But there are few men of ardent genius, and masterful nature, who can take a terrible disappointment lightly at the age of one-and-thirty; and Charles Fox was not among them.

The King had been annoyed, and alarmed, as much as so very resolute a monarch was capable of alarm, by the signs of disaffection which showed themselves in the Government ranks during the first eight or nine weeks of the session. He told Lord North, in manly and dignified words, that Dunning's Resolutions were aimed at some one more exalted than the Prime Minister. "I wish," he remarked, "that I did not feel at whom they are personally levelled." He put on record his surprise that men "should so far lose their reason" as to attack the constitution of the Board of Trade; and he signified his grave displeasure at the miserable majority which had barely saved the Crown Pensioners from exposure to the comments of newspapers, and the resentment of the taxpayer. He reminded his Minister of the deter-

mined attitude, and the drastic remedies, by which, sixteen years before, at the height of the Wilkes controversy, Mr. Grenville had brought a mutinous House of Commons to reason over the question of General Warrants. Lord North, (said His Majesty,) would have done well to imitate that loyal and courageous example. On another occasion, when the Government had been beaten by two hundred and fifteen votes to two hundred and thirteen, the King sat down to his desk before breakfast next morning in order to express his dissatisfaction with those five gentlemen of the Ministerial party who had reached the House of Commons just too late for the division. George the Third, like Charles the First, had his question of The Five Members to settle. His method of dealing with it, though less sensational, was much more effective than that adopted by his predecessor; and, before the end of April, he was once more in secure command of a parliamentary majority.

The weight of the royal hand was felt in the Lobby of the House of Commons. The reaction set in, and all through May it waxed stronger every week. Lord North easily defeated a proposal brought forward by General Conway for Quieting the Troubles in America. Burke was repeatedly out-voted in Committee, until, on the eighteenth of the month, he withdrew his Bill for the Reformation of the Civil Establishments with a few melancholy sentences of resignation and despair. The King watched with grim approval the discomfiture of his political adversaries; but he never forgave, and never again trusted, a House of Commons which had been guilty of passing a Resolution reflecting upon the increased power of the Crown. That House had got out of control once, and might at any moment get out of control again. King George was in a hurry to see the last of the existing Parliament; and he was sanguine enough to hope better things from its successor. "If," he wrote, "I had the power of oratory of Demosthenes, or the pen of an Addison, I could not say more on the subject than what I can convey in the following few lines.

I am conscious that, if Lord North will resolve with spirit to continue in his present employment, with the assistance of a New Parliament I shall be able to keep the present constitution in its pristine lustre."[1] His Majesty was determined to proclaim a Dissolution at the earliest convenient opportunity; and that opportunity suddenly presented itself in a strange shape, and from an altogether unlooked-for quarter. Events of startling, and even appalling, character swept like a whirlwind over the face of party politics at home, and diverted public attention, for the time being, from the perils of colonial rebellion and foreign war.

Very grave consequences arose from the vacillation displayed by Lord North's Government with regard to the Roman Catholic Relief Act of the year 1778. That great and just law had a transient moment of apparent popularity, during which the Cabinet laid claim to a full share in the credit of the measure. Dundas, the Lord Advocate for Scotland, speaking on behalf of Ministers in the House of Commons, made a voluntary promise to extend the benefits of toleration beyond the Border by repealing those penal Statutes which were still in force against the Roman Catholics of Scotland. A motion disapproving of the proposed change in the law was brought forward in the General Assembly of the Scotch Church; but it was vigorously opposed by Doctor William Robertson, the celebrated historian, and was defeated by a substantial majority. That vote was the high-water mark of religious tolerance in the region north of Tweed. An Association of people who styled themselves The Friends of the Protestant Interest lost not a moment in setting on foot a fiery agitation against the project for "granting to Roman Catholics the privilege of purchasing, and succeeding to, landed property." The Edinburgh populace, the most formidable of all mobs, was invited to outrage and disorder by a handbill artfully composed, and printed and distributed with

[1] George the Third to Lord North; May 19, 1780.

an attention to the dictates of economy which had a flavour of North British thriftiness.[1] A tumult arose at the appointed place and hour. A Roman Catholic chapel was demolished; a house, in which the priest occupied a flat, was plundered, and burned to the ground; and the military authorities were only just in time to preserve Principal Robertson's dwelling from the same fate.[2]

The effect upon the nerves of Lord North and his brother Ministers was instantaneous. These rulers, who had committed the British nation to another Seven Years' War in order to punish a riot on the Quayside at Boston, surrendered what they had solemnly declared to be their convictions and intentions at the first breath of sedition in the streets of Edinburgh; and Dundas was commissioned to announce in Parliament that all attempts to procure an Act in favour of Scotch Roman Catholics would be laid aside "until time, and cool persuasion, should remove the unhappy prejudices" entertained towards them by their Protestant fellow-countrymen.[3] This abandonment of principle, at the bidding of violence, was the signal for an outburst of fanaticism all the island over. The responsible government had deserted its post, and the rabble of bigotry poured unopposed through the breach. Protestant Associations were formed in

[1] "Please to read this carefully, keep it clean, and drop it somewhere else." That was the postscript appended to the hand-bill.

[2] Doctor Robertson, all through his life, gave frequent proofs of his breadth of mind, and his indomitable combativeness. In 1745, at the age of four-and-twenty, he left his first Manse to fight the Pretender. General Cope refused to admit him and his parishioners into the ranks, on the ground that they were "too undisciplined;" — although it is not easy to see how, at the very worst, they could have run away faster than the rest of General Cope's army. When the Reverend John Home produced his tragedy of Douglas, Robertson led the minority of eleven to two hundred which protested against the condemnation levelled by the Church of Scotland at a clergyman who had written for the stage. But perhaps the most striking instance of the Doctor's courage was the letter in which, — when he was Principal of Edinburgh University, and Moderator of the General Assembly, — he assured Gibbon of his admiration for *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, and his hope that the volume, in spite of the outcry raised against it in clerical quarters, would be as widely read as it deserved.

[3] *Parliamentary History*, XIX, 1142; XX, 280.

town and country; and a petition for the revocation of the Savile Act was circulated through England, and signed with tens of thousands of real, and imaginary, names. The centre of the movement was soon transferred from the committee-room, and the pulpit, to the gin-shop and the tavern; and money was freely spent on inflaming the evil passions of the vulgar by methods which had little in common with honourable politics, and still less with Christianity. Then the King's Ministers saw their opportunity, and, regardless of consistency, and defiant of ordinary decency, they took steps to encourage the spread of religious hatred, and turn it to their own advantage. The word was passed round; and for many months afterwards, until a general election had come and gone, the subsidised Government journals were employed in writing down the statesmen of the Opposition as allies and accomplices of the Papacy. "How generous it is of the Ministry," (so Fox complained to Edmund Burke,) "to publish hand-bills, and fill their papers with abuse of me on this popery-subject, I leave it for them to consider. Since I began my letter I have laid my hand on one of the hand-bills, and inclose it to you; though, God knows, it is not worth the groat you will have to pay for it."

That was an unworthy proceeding on the part of an English Ministry. The sequel was not slow in coming. On the second of June 1780 a vast procession, marshalled and headed by Lord George Gordon, carried the monster petition to Westminster, where the Houses were beset by a mischievous and ferocious crowd, containing, as the day wore on, an ever smaller proportion of good Protestants, and a larger contingent of extremely bad citizens. Commoners, and peers, and more particularly bishops, who had shown favour to the Catholic claims, were brutally assaulted on the way to their duties, and some of them narrowly escaped being torn in pieces. Then began the last Reign of Terror which London ever witnessed. That city had seen one such night on the eleventh of December 1688, after the news got abroad

that King James had fled; but in June 1780 there was a full week of license and disorder. The places of worship of the obnoxious creed, including the private chapels of foreign ambassadors, were sacked and destroyed with every circumstance of insult and impiety. The homes of Roman Catholic noblemen, gentlemen, and merchants were invaded, and their living rooms, and store-rooms, and, (before everything else,) their cellars, were searched and gutted; — an expressive phrase which was supposed to have come into familiar use during that dreadful week, although it had been employed in literature, three generations back, by no less a master of English than John Dryden.[1] The warehouses of a Roman Catholic distiller, who manufactured on an extensive scale, were emptied of their contents; and the street was flooded with raw spirits, which were swallowed with maddening, and in many cases fatal, effects by a multitude of wretches whose frenzy did not require the aid of stimulants. The Bank of England was twice attacked, and only rescued from pillage by sharp fighting. The prisons were stormed and wrecked, and their inmates set at liberty as a reinforcement to the army of disorder. Shops were closed, and markets vacated and silent; and prudent householders chalked up "No Popery" on their shutters, and walked abroad with the Protestant colours in their hats, — bedizened, (said Horace Walpole,) "with blue ribbons like a May-day garland."

The vengeance of the lawless fell with severity upon those members of the community who came forward in defence of the law; whether they were upright and intrepid judges like Lord Mansfield; or stipendiary magistrates, like Sir John Fielding, brave enough to keep their Courts open for the summary trial of offenders; or honest tradesmen who had ventured to give evidence against depredators and incendiaries. The menace of the insurrection was especially directed against the statesmen of the Opposition, whom ignorant

[1] "A troop of cut-throat guards were sent to seize
The rich men's goods, and gut their palaces."

and credulous people had been taught to regard as so many Popish conspirators. The great Whig mansions were barricaded and loopholed, and defended by armed retainers, and serjeants' parties of regular infantry. "For four nights," said Edmund Burke, "I kept watch at Lord Rockingham's, or Sir George Savile's, whose houses were garrisoned by a strong body of soldiers, together with numbers of true friends, of the first rank, who were willing to share their danger. Savile House, Rockingham House, Devonshire House to be turned into garrisons! We have all served the country for several years, — some of us for near thirty, — with fidelity, labour, and affection: and we are obliged to put ourselves under military protection for our houses and our persons."[1] There seemed no end to the agony and humiliation of the imperial city. On the sixth night of the disturbances a large part of London was still in possession of the mob. Six-and-thirty distinct and separate conflagrations could be counted from one spot of observation; and the rattle of musketry was heard in many quarters, since the town was filling fast with troops, who by this time had begun to use their deadly weapons to effective purpose. Two days, and nights, had still to elapse before the revolt was finally quenched in blood, and drowned in liquor; for three or four hundred of the rioters had been shot down, and a great, but unknown, number had died of drink, or perished in the ruins of the burning houses.

The Opposition leaders had signalised themselves by their calmness and self-possession during the whole of these frightful and bewildering events. In the House of Peers, on the first day of the riots, as one noble lord, after another, made his way into the Chamber with his face pale and bruised, and his coat in tatters, and his wig awry, — and while the roar of the furious multitude was heard through the windows, — the Duke of Richmond was in possession of the floor. Unmoved by any

[1] Edmund Burke to Richard Shackleton; Tuesday night, June 13, 1780.

emotion except anger he haughtily declared that, however many partisans of disorder "were at that moment thundering at the door, and hallooing in his ears," he could only say that he had voted with sincere conviction for the Bill of which they complained, and that, were they ten times as numerous, he would never consent to vote otherwise. And then, setting aside that aspect of the matter as a trivial incident, he entered upon a clear, minute, and very copious explanation of his plan for annual parliaments, like a great preacher who quietly proceeds with his sermon when there has been an alarm of fire in a crowded church. Burke, — after he had stowed away his books where they could be safe from destruction, and had placed his wife beyond the reach of danger, — dismissed a party of soldiers whom the Government, handsomely enough, had sent to protect his residence. "I thought," he said, "that, in the scarcity of troops, they might be better employed than in looking after my paltry remains." Next day he showed himself in the streets, alone and unguarded, not concealing his identity, and talking courteously and seriously with the more decent wearers of the blue cockade.[1] He made his way to Westminster through the densest of the throng, and there delivered his mind to his brother members. "I spoke my sentiments," (he wrote,) "in such a way that I do not think I have ever, on any occasion, seemed to affect the House more forcibly. However, such was the confusion, that they could not be kept from coming to a resolution which I thought unbecoming and pusillanimous, which was that we should take that flagitious petition, which came from that base gang called The Protestant Association, into our serious consideration." And, again, it was admitted on all hands that no one showed himself more energetic

[1] Richard Burke wrote thus to his brother's principal constituent. "We are all, thank God, hitherto safe. Edmund, who delivered himself, with his name, into their hands, is safe, firm, and composed. Some blame him. The house yet stands. I rather think it will go to-night, if their other more important objects do not divert them." Richard Burke to Richard Champion; June 7, 1780, *in what was London.*

in the cause of order than John Wilkes. The Lord Mayor of London disgraced himself by his timidity and slothfulness, and was afterwards called upon by the Attorney General to account for his gross neglect of duty; another important civic dignitary ordered the constables of his Ward to mount the Protestant colours, and took care to be seen arm in arm with Lord George Gordon; but Alderman Wilkes sat in Court daily, during all the stated hours, committing for trial a long list of culprits who had been caught red-handed. He went in person through a bad quarter of the town to arrest the printer of a seditious handbill; and, to the intense amusement of contemporary mankind, he was reported, (though he always stoutly denied it,) to have arrested persons "under General Warrants issued on anonymous information." It remains an open question whether the individual in all London, who displayed the greatest coolness and courage during that awful crisis, was King George the Third himself, or the man among his twelve million subjects whom His Majesty loved the least.

Burke, and Sir George Savile, and the Duke of Richmond, were ill-rewarded for their exertions in defence of the law, and were misrepresented to the world as the prime instigators of a barbarous raid upon those very Roman Catholics whose civil rights they had advocated with so much eloquence and pertinacity. As soon as tranquillity had been restored, and Lord George Gordon securely lodged in the Tower, the Ministerial press, with significant unanimity, fell to accusing the parliamentary Opposition of having organised and financed the riot in the hope that it would enlarge its dimensions, and assume the character of a revolution. The only evidence adduced was in the shape of unfounded rumours, and baseless assumptions, artfully scattered up and down the columns of printed matter which recorded the authentic news of the day.[1] The

[1] One newspaper reported that "the French Ambassador at the Hague had said confidently that, within the space of two months, we should hear

cue was given by a paragraph in the Morning Post, a journal notoriously in close alliance with the Treasury. "The miscreants," (so the allegation was worded,) "who have been defacing and destroying with the most savage brutality, were not summoned to the work of villainy solely by the traitorous trumpet of Lord George Gordon. The rest of the patriot tribe laid the foundation-stone, and Lord George has but completed the pile of infamy and treason." So outrageous an indictment had never been concocted since the Emperor Nero charged the Christians with setting Rome in flames. But the opponents of Lord North, unlike those primitive martyrs, were by no means a helpless or long-suffering folk. The City of London, — most of whose inhabitants were at once staunch friends of order, and determined enemies of the Ministry, — was all alive with indignation and resentment. The Court of Common Council had been convoked to pass a well-earned vote of thanks to the City Militia, and present a pair of colours to the Associations of Horse and Foot Volunteers who had evinced zeal and prowess in the suppression of the tumult.[1] The offensive passage in the Morning Post was on the same occasion brought to the notice of the Council, and a resolution was carried in favour of prosecuting the publishers of the newspaper which had cast a false and odious imputation upon eminent public men whom their fellow-citizens held in respect and honour.

Shabby things have often been done, and not on one side only, in the interests of party; but perhaps the shabbiest proceedings on record were the tactics employed by Lord North's Government in the summer of

of London being burned to the ground," — a piece of information which he was supposed to have learned "from a certain nobleman in treasonable correspondence with the foes of his country;" and a chimney-sweep, who was directing the operations of the rioters, had been seen to pull out of his pocket a handful of shillings which he only too probably had received from a well-known member of the Opposition.

[1] Their services met with inadequate recognition from the regular army. An officer of the Footguards had been overheard to say that, if the Volunteers behind him would ground their arms, he was not afraid of the mob in front.

the year 1780. On the one hand the leaders of the Opposition were credited by the Ministerial press with the authorship of the Roman Catholic Relief Act in order to alienate from them the support of ultra Protestants at the impending general election; and on the other hand they were accused of having organised and financed those anti-Catholic riots which had set London in flames. But men who expect nothing short of fair play from opponents, and who count upon winning popular favour, and popular support, in exact proportion to their deserts, had better keep out of public life. There were symptoms which indicated that the dismay and disgust, felt by all respectable persons during the week that London lay at the mercy of the wreckers, had produced a temporary, but most undeniable, set-back to the fortunes of the Opposition. The Court, though not the Cabinet, was enjoying a turn of genuine popularity. Law and order had been imperilled by the supineness and timidity of the men in office, who had failed in the most elementary duty of rulers, — the protection of society. But the situation had been saved by the personal interposition of the King; and George the Third, for good or for evil, was recognised to be a more important factor in the government of the country than all his Ministers together.

The most instructive and universal lesson which history teaches is that mob violence, by an inevitable and natural reaction, increases the prestige of arbitrary authority; and the effect which the disturbances had wrought on public opinion was acknowledged in manful and plain-spoken terms by the leading Opposition newspaper. "One good circumstance for Administration," (thus the Evening Post confessed,) "is that, previous to the Riots, the public were anxious about the fate of the County petitions, the result of the American war, and the success of our fleets. The whole of these important matters now, like wisdom, 'sleepeth in a fool's ear;' while association for domestic defence, Lord George Gordon, who is to be hanged, and such-like tales, form

almost the whole of public conversation." Within a few weeks after the suppression of the Gordon riots it became matter of notoriety in the London clubs that writs, summoning a new House of Commons, had already been prepared for issue. Horace Walpole told his friend Mason that, according to information which had reached him, Parliament was to have been dissolved on the ninth of August, but that the announcement had been delayed in the hope that every post might bring news of a successful battle on sea or land. "A leaf of laurel," he said, "no bigger than one shred of a daisy, would give wing to the Proclamation that lies ready to fly." Walpole's surmise was correct; but the policy of waiting for a possible victory was condemned as infinitely foolish by the two most powerful, and knowing, members of the Cabinet. The Earl of Sandwich represented to Mr. John Robinson that Rigby was exceedingly eager and anxious about the speedy, or rather immediate, dissolution of Parliament. "I think," (continued Sandwich,) "all your reasons for delay are weak. Our opponents are depressed. The nation is set against riots and rioters of all kinds. Events have been favourable beyond conception. Will you wait to give our enemies time to rally and re-unite, and for some blow in our military operations to turn the tide of popularity against us?" Sandwich and Rigby carried the day; and on the first of September 1780, towards the end of the sixth year of its life, the Parliament was dissolved.[1]

For months past everybody had been anticipating a Dissolution; and yet, when the Proclamation at last appeared, it "operated like a thunder-clap, with respect to its suddenness and surprise, on those who were not in the secret."[2] A stratagem which put to sleep the

[1] Letter of August 1, 1780, from *The Papers of the Marquess of Abergavenny, as published by the Historical Manuscripts Commission in the year 1887.*

[2] *History of Europe in the Annual Register for 1781;* chapter 8.

vigilance of the Opposition was engineered by the King himself, who had nothing to learn about the conduct of a General Election, and who knew the value of a three days' start in a house-to-house canvass as well as any local party manager in England. His Majesty despatched to the Prime Minister a letter of instructions covering four sheets of paper, and marked "Most Private." He expressed his desire that Parliament should be prorogued, with every circumstance of publicity, until the fourth day of October, and that the writs, without any hint of the step which was in contemplation having been allowed to transpire, should go forth on the first day of September. There was no need, in his opinion, that Lord North should deprive himself of a well deserved, and most necessary, holiday. "On the contrary," (wrote the King,) "I recommend that you should have it publicly given out that you have gone into Kent for three weeks or a month. You might stay in Kent until the 28th of August, and return to Bushy on that day, unknown, and unexpectedly; for, while you and the Ministers are still in and about town, a momentary Dissolution is expected." The King's own preparations were in a state of forwardness, although the last few touches remained to be given. "I will tell Sir Patrick Crawford," (he said,) "that, if he can secure the second seat at Arundel, undoubtedly a friend is ready to give £3000; but that I doubt he will find that they must give Lord Surrey one member." A week afterwards His Majesty sent Mr. John Robinson a packet of banknotes, to the amount of fourteen thousand pounds, under cover of a letter; and then he awaited the event with the calmness of an experienced general on the eve of a campaign, who is conscious that he has neglected nothing which can minimise disappointment, and ensure success.[1]

The opponents of the Ministry were scattered all over the island at their own, or other people's, rural man-

[1] *Papers of the Marquess of Abergavenny;* pages 33, 34.

sions; at race-meetings and county-ball gatherings, in the Pump-rooms at Bath and Buxton, and on the Pantiles at Tunbridge Wells. Not a few among them, as soon as the parliamentary session ended, had hastened down from Westminster to do active duty with their militia regiments. Sir George Savile, on the strength of a private assurance that all idea of an immediate Dissolution had been abandoned, was in camp on Ranmer Common. "The shortness of the time," we are told, "allotted for the election increased the difficulties and disadvantages to those who were at a distance from their boroughs or interests." So many express messengers had been sent off into every part of England, to convey the writs, and warn the Ministerial candidates, that a sufficient supply of horses could not be procured even by the Post Office. The demand for chaises was so great that it was not unusual to see three passengers in the same carriage, behind a postillion mounted upon a single horse. That was not the style in which Charles Fox, and his political associates, had been accustomed to travel. While aspirants to parliamentary honours were plunged in worry and discomfort the constituents lived in clover. At Taunton in Somersetshire, for a considerable time past, five pounds of beef, and six quarts of strong beer, had been issued daily to each voter; and in scores of boroughs, and dozens of counties, an elector might call for liquor at the candidate's expense during all the time that the political Saturnalia lasted. It was a bad September for the partridges. "The dissolution of parliament," (so a journalist noted,) "is a sad blow to the preservation of game. Every man who has a vote can have leave to shoot by only asking for it." A slight, but not imperceptible, addition to the prevailing turmoil resulted from an electoral process which, under the terms of our Constitution, was carried on simultaneously with the election of a House of Commons. It was a process which in those days, though not altogether in ours, had very little serious meaning for anybody. "The ridiculous practice," said the

Morning Post, "of dissolving the Convocation, and calling a new one, which will never sit, continues still an insult to common sense, and is to a New Parliament what the Clown is to the pantomime." Those were strong expressions for the columns of a high Tory newspaper; and they bear significant testimony to the ecclesiastical apathy which marked the whole middle period of the eighteenth century.[1]

The election of 1780 was full of personal interest; for several famous members of the House of Commons changed their constituencies under circumstances which throw an informing light upon the national manners, and upon the politics of the time. Burke's position at Bristol, — irksome, and almost intolerable, as from the very first it was, — had at length become untenable. He was a poor man; and a contest for the representation of the great seaport cost, day for day, almost as much as a small war. The expenses of his election in 1774 had been cheerfully and proudly defrayed by his local supporters. But by the year 1780 our colonial trade had been destroyed, and our foreign trade more than half ruined, as a consequence of that American policy which Burke had always condemned and resisted; and his friends at Bristol, however willing, were totally unable to find the requisite funds. Moreover there were deeper, and more sinister, causes operating against Edmund Burke's prospects as a candidate than the mere

[1] The amount of liquor for which a candidate was obliged to pay was for him a less grave matter than the amount of liquor which he was called upon to consume. In 1780 two young Whigs of the Opposition successfully contested Cambridgeshire against the sitting member, Sir Sampson Gideon, "whose expenses for this month," (so one of his friends reported,) "have been enormous, beyond all belief. Sending my servant on a particular message to Sir Sampson, he found him in bed, not well, and probably half asleep. * * * I wonder, indeed, that he is alive, considering the immense fatigue, and necessary drinking, he must undergo." This form of tyranny had not altogether died out in the later days of Lord Palmerston. On an evening in the London season of 1865 the author was told, by a refined and fastidious man of letters and fashion, that he had been canvassing Hertfordshire all day, and that he had been obliged to accept thirteen glasses of sherry since breakfast. And what sherry!

want of money. Many of his constituents, for selfish reasons of their own, resented his vigorous protest against the cruel abuses under which the poorer class of debtors suffered. A very much larger number had never forgiven him his efforts for the removal of penal laws against their Roman Catholic fellow-countrymen, and for the redress of commercial injustice to Ireland. His intimate knowledge of those two questions, — fired by enthusiasm, and decked out by eloquence, — had produced a decisive effect upon the public mind. The remedial measures, which had been placed on the Statute Book, were undoubtedly either introduced, or accepted, by Lord North's Government, and sanctioned by the general, or unanimous, adhesion of Parliament. But Burke, though only a private member, was so great a man that the anger aroused in certain quarters by that humane and equitable legislation was most unfairly concentrated upon his single person. The impertinence of his detractors went to such a point that he was called upon, as a penance for his misdeeds, to rise in his place in the House of Commons, and propose the repeal of the Roman Catholic Relief Act. "Am I," (he indignantly asked,) "to be the only sour and narrow-hearted bigot out of five hundred and fifty-eight gentlemen? Not one but Lord George Gordon, for purposes of his own, ever objected to the Act in question, opposed it, or proposed any repeal of it whatsoever; and am I to make myself the dupe of a dirty faction at Edinburgh, because their miserable agents have set on a rabble of miscreants here to insult the parliament, to demolish Newgate, and attempt to plunder the Bank?"[1] That was a touch of Burke's familiar style when he was writing in confidence to a private correspondent; and he soon found occasion to state the case as between himself, and the city of Bristol, in spoken words which will endure as long as men read English.

On the eighth of September 1780 Burke addressed a

[1] Edmund Burke Esq. to John Noble Esq.; Charles Street, August 11, 1780.

Town Meeting in the Guildhall at Bristol. The speech was beyond criticism and above praise; and it is too symmetrically constructed, and continuously argued, to justify the quotation of detached passages. It should be studied, and re-studied, by every public man, (Conservative or Liberal, for Edmund Burke was both,) as an exposition of the principles which ought to govern the relations of a member and his constituents. When Burke had had his say he presented himself as a candidate, first at the Council House, and then on the Exchange. A very short canvass, (in the course of which one of his opponents died suddenly,) satisfied him that under no circumstances would the choice of the electors fall upon himself; and on the day of nomination he gave up the contest, and bade farewell to Bristol in a few sentences attuned to a strain that has seldom been heard on the hustings.[1] The feeling with which the news was received by all gallant and honourable men, to whatsoever party they might belong, is exemplified in a letter scribbled off by Charles Fox at the most exciting moment of his own hard-fought election. "Indeed, my dear Burke," he hastened to write, "it requires all your candour and reverse of selfishness, (for I know no other word to express it,) to be in patience with that rascally city; for so I must call it after the way in which it has behaved to you." Burke did not remain long outside Parliament, for Lord Rockingham invited him to resume his former seat at Malton in the North Riding, where he was welcomed back with a genuine Yorkshire greeting. "Every heart," (said the Evening Post,) "seemed

[1] "I have served the public for fifteen years. I have served you in particular for six. What is passed is well stored. It is safe, and out of the power of fortune. What is to come is in wiser hands than ours, and He, in whose hands it is, best knows whether it is best for you and me that I should be in parliament, or even in the world. The melancholy event of yesterday reads to us an awful lesson against being too much troubled about any of the objects of ordinary ambition. The worthy gentleman, who has been snatched from us at the moment of the election, and in the middle of the contest, whilst his desires were as warm, and his hopes as eager, as ours, has feelingly told us what shadows we are, and what shadows we pursue."

to rejoice that the services of this truly great man were restored to the nation. The concourse of people that assembled from the neighbouring towns on this occasion was prodigious, and the day was spent in the utmost festivities." Burke can hardly be blamed if his experience during the year 1780 confirmed him in his belief that the evils which beset the State ought to be cured by other means than by adding to the representation of populous constituencies, and disfranchising the smaller boroughs.

Admiral Keppel's fate was watched by politicians, not of his own party only, with a friendly attention for which leisure is seldom found during the selfishness and hurry of a general election. Eighteen months previously he had been thrust, sorely against his will, into sensational prominence and unexampled popularity; and, — modest, generous, and forgiving that he was, — he retained until his dying day, which was not very far distant, the affection of his countrymen. But he had enemies and ill-wishers, and now their chance had once more come. Keppel sat for the borough of Windsor, and the King was determined to have him out of it. Racy stories were current of His Majesty's somewhat clumsy, but very effective, industry as a canvasser that would be quite incredible if it were not for the evidence in his own handwriting which recent times have brought to light. Early in April he informed the Secretary of the Treasury that he should make it his business "privately to sound the inhabitants of the borough," and report the result to the central office in Downing Street; and it must be allowed that the royal methods of ascertaining and influencing local opinion were more direct than dignified.[1] As the day of election approached he gave orders that each of his houses in the town should stand on the rate-book in the name of one or another of

[1] Lord Albemarle relates a family tradition to the effect that the King visited the shop of a silk mercer, who was a sworn Keppelite, "and said in his usual quick manner, 'The Queen wants a gown, — wants a gown. No Keppel! No Keppel!'"

his servants, and he made arrangements by which, at the cost of some discomfort to themselves, they should qualify as inhabitants of the borough. Keppel, under grievous temptation, bore himself like a loyal subject, and a man of fine honour. In a speech from the hustings he alluded to a rumour of the King's interference in the election. "This," he said, "cannot be believed. It *ought* not to be believed. It *must* not be believed."[1]

The royal bakers, and brewers, and butchers polled against the Admiral to a man. He was beaten by sixteen votes, and the opponent who had ousted him was soon afterwards appointed Ranger of Windsor Little Park. As soon as the news got abroad a large deputation from Surrey waited upon the defeated candidate, and he was forthwith put in nomination for the county, and elected by a majority of over five hundred. Those Surrey voters who resided in Windsor raced home to announce the victory. Keppel informed Lord Rockingham that the cannon were soon firing, and the bells ringing, and that almost every dwelling throughout the borough was lighted. "I have been told," he wrote, "that His Majesty said that it would possibly be 'a busy night,' and had recommended a serjeant and twelve privates to patrol the streets with loaded arms." But Keppel had partisans in the neighbourhood who could not have been shot however badly they might misbehave themselves. The Prince of Wales, and Prince Frederick, took pains to express to all Keppel's friends their extreme satisfaction at his success; and the little Duke of Sussex, (as he long

[1] The King's correspondence with Mr. John Robinson, in reference to his Windsor houses, is given by the Historical Manuscripts Commission among the other Abergavenny papers. The London Evening Post entered into particulars. "Colonel Egerton and Colonel Conway, — gentlemen who have splendid apartments in the Castle, — being rated for some stables in the town, slept each of them in a dirty bed in a neighbouring house in order to become inhabitants. The King had purchased some houses in the town, and sent Mr. Ramus, and some of his musicians, to sleep there one night. Two days before the election they paid the rates for these houses, instead of the King."

afterwards informed Lord Albemarle,) was locked up in the royal nursery for wearing Keppel colours. One sentence in the Admiral's Address of Thanks to the Electors of Surrey was read with special interest and sympathy. "After the example of your fathers," he wrote, "you have taught wicked men the ill husbandry of injustice, and the folly of attempting public, undisguised, oppression in a country whose liberties have in very memorable instances been strengthened and improved by the wrongs of the obscurest individual in it." That much notice Keppel took, and no more, of the treacherous and unrelenting persecution which he had endured from a British Ministry ever since he went to sea in command of a British fleet in obedience to the pressing request of his Sovereign.

A man of genius, almost as celebrated as Edmund Burke himself, lost a seat in Parliament, and was subsequently provided with another, under conditions most characteristic of the period. Gibbon had always been on friendly terms with Mr. Edward Eliot, his cousin by marriage, a Cornish squire whose borough interest was exorbitant out of all proportion to his not inconsiderable landed property. At the general election of 1774 Eliot, — not indeed for nothing, but in return for a much smaller sum of money than he would have expected from any one except a clever and promising member of his own family, — sent his relative to the House of Commons as one of the members for Liskeard. "There," wrote Gibbon, "I took my seat at the beginning of the memorable contest between Great Britain and America, and supported, with many a sincere and silent vote, the rights, though not perhaps the interests, of the mother-country." When the 1774 Parliament was a twelvemonth old, Mr. Eliot left his family borough of St. Germans in order to sit for Cornwall; and the freeholders of Cornwall, like the great majority of county freeholders all the island over, had no love for the American policy of the Cabinet. Their sentiments were shared to the full by Mr. Eliot; and

accordingly, as soon as Parliament was dissolved in September 1780, he gravely and solemnly warned his unlucky cousin that, by the support which he had given to Lord North, he had forfeited the confidence of his constituents. Gibbon understood the inner meaning of that ominous communication. "Mr. Eliot," (so he afterwards explained to the world in one of his multitudinous autobiographies,) "was now deeply engaged in the measures of Opposition; and the electors of Liskeard are commonly of the same opinion as Mr. Eliot."[1] Gibbon accepted his doom in a letter gracefully phrased, and as manly and self-respecting as the situation comported. "I have not attempted," he said, "to shake your decided resolution; nor shall I presume to arraign the consistency of the Electors of Liskeard, whom you so gravely introduce. You are undoubtedly free as air to confer, and to withdraw, your parliamentary favours." That was how Edward Gibbon wrote when he doffed the panoply of the classic historian. It was a serious blow to his personal fortunes. If he ceased to be a Member of Parliament he must very soon cease to be a Lord of Trade; and without an official salary he could not afford to live in England, and still less in London, until he had secured a competence by the completion, and publication, of the last three among the six volumes of The Decline and Fall. But Lord North entertained for his eminent supporter a kindness which Gibbon long afterwards repaid by a nobly expressed tribute of gratitude and fidelity;[2] and the historian ere long re-entered the House of Commons as the nominee for a Government borough. "My new constituents of Lymington," (he wrote in July 1781,) "obligingly chose me in my absence. I took my seat last Wednesday, and am now so old a member that I begin to complain of the heat and length of the Session."

[1] *Memoir E* of Mr. Murray's edition, page 322.

[2] *Preface to the Fourth Volume of the Quarto Edition of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.*

Far and away the most important event in the general election of 1780, — whether considered in its bearing upon the American question, or on Charles Fox's position in the House of Commons and the country, — was the contest for the representation of the City of Westminster. The Government were at much pains to strengthen their hold upon that vast electorate; and they had secured a pair of candidates very hard to beat. With excellent judgment they put forward Sir George Rodney, who at that precise moment would have been chosen by acclamation in almost any free and independent constituency throughout Great Britain. He possessed every qualification for uniting the suffrages of all parties. He was a personal adherent of the King, and had expended very large sums of money, which he could ill afford to spare, in fighting His Majesty's electioneering battles; and yet all the world was aware that he positively abominated Lord Sandwich, — a piece of knowledge which was in itself a passport to the favour of his fellow-countrymen. The First Lord of the Admiralty had spited and ill-used Rodney in the past; and it was not until the fifth year of the war drew towards a conclusion that, in the dearth of capable naval commanders, public opinion at length insisted on the neglected officer being employed at sea. It soon became evident that in this veteran of sixty-two years old, with an impaired constitution, and a broken fortune, the nation had got hold of a most competent, and, (what in those disastrous times was rarer still,) a lucky admiral. Early in January 1780 Rodney captured five-and-twenty Spanish merchantmen, together with the whole of their escort. A week afterwards, in the neighbourhood of Cape St. Vincent, he attacked Don Juan Langara's squadron in a style which Englishmen had begun to fear was obsolete, taking four seventy-gun ships with all their crews, and sending three others into the air, or to their last berth among the breakers. Then, before many more days had

elapsed, he accomplished his special mission of re-victualling the garrison of Gibraltar. General Eliott, the hero of that immortal defence, was already experimenting in his own person on the amount of sustenance which could keep body and soul together, and had brought himself down to four ounces of rice a day, when a brig ran the gauntlet of the blockade with the tidings that Rodney was at hand with a victorious fleet, and a supply of beef, and flour, and beer, and biscuit which would suffice for many months to come.

When the King dissolved Parliament in September 1780 Rodney was on board his flag-ship, in face of the enemy, three thousand miles away on the further side of the Atlantic Ocean; but the mere name of him was worth more than the bodily presence of any other possible candidate. The second choice of the Ministry fell upon one of the ex-members for Westminster, the son and heir of the Duke of Newcastle, "Thomas Pelham Clinton, commonly called Lord Thomas Pelham Clinton," — and, more commonly still, the Earl of Lincoln. The Duke apparently regarded that imposing cluster of famous political names as a sufficient donation on the part of his family towards the success of the election; and he steadfastly refused to subscribe to the party funds. "If Mr. Fox stands," (so Lord North told the Secretary of the Treasury,) "we shall have much trouble, and more expense, which will all fall on us. Neither Lincoln nor Rodney will contribute." Ready cash was equally necessary in the opposite camp. It was all Charles Fox could do if he found enough silver to pay for his hackney-coaches; but his political associates came to his help with well-advised liberality. Ever since he entered Parliament at the age of nineteen he had been sitting for boroughs which contained few houses, or, (in one case,) no houses at all. That was all very well while he was playing the fool, more brilliantly than it has ever been played before or since, during his first half-dozen Sessions. But he now was the leader of a strong party, and the

most popular champion of a great cause; and he would carry much more weight as the chosen representative of Westminster, with its myriad of electors, than as member for Midhurst, or even for Malmesbury. In the year 1830 the assailants of West Indian slavery, and the advocates of Parliamentary Reform, subscribed scores of thousands of pounds to bring in Henry Brougham for the premier county of Yorkshire; and that circumstance has always been regarded as one of the most honourable episodes in Brougham's career. And so, at a not less grave crisis in the fortunes of England, Lord Rockingham and his friends, with open purses, and clear consciences, rallied to the assistance of Charles Fox at Westminster.

Fox had lately been engaged in the novel occupation of paying attention to his bodily health, which those who knew him best did not regard as a very hopeful enterprise. "Charles," wrote one of his associates, "is not yet well, and is advised going to Bath. He talks of going tomorrow; but I am afraid he will not conform to his physician's advice; and they say, unless he lives very abstemiously, the waters will do him more harm than good." How Charles Fox maintained the character of an invalid must always be matter for conjecture. His next authentic appearance on the surface of history is recorded in a letter from the Duke of Queensberry, who gave him what no doubt was far too good a dinner at Amesbury in Wiltshire. The Duke's report to George Selwyn was to the effect that Charles thought himself the better for Bath, but had not yet recovered his voice. It was the thirty-first of August, and Fox was then on his way to Bridgewater, where he had been invited by the local Whigs to stand for their borough. He distrusted his chances of success at Westminster, and was not sorry to have a second string to his redoubted bow.[1] Fox was still in the West of England when, like all who were not in the secret, the announcement of the Dissolution took

[1] The Revd. Dr. Warner to George Selwyn; September 1, 1780.

him by surprise. He at once dashed off a letter to Richard Fitzpatrick in the offhand, but very business-like, terms which marked all his communications to his nearest friend, and with plenty of full-stops to make his meaning clear. "For God's sake, my dear Dick," (he wrote,) "lose no time in calling the Westminster Committee, and beginning the Canvass if necessary. Do let all the gentlemen who really wish to serve me know how very necessary their appearance is. Some of the Cavendishes particularly. If I find I can leave this place without any material injury I will be in town tomorrow. But if you think I can be absent from Westminster for a few days I could get the Election here on Wednesday, and stay till then, which would be of use. Pray send me word directly what you think, and do not leave town unless it is absolutely necessary, for you will be of infinite use."[1]

Fox lost no time in following his letter to London. He arrived in tearing spirits; and, whatever might have been amiss with his voice, there was quite enough of it to serve his purposes. During three full weeks to come he kept the town agog with excitement, and had vitality to spare for the encouragement of his followers in the provinces. England was still ruled by an aristocracy; and the most important personages in Westminster were certain great noblemen who were ground landlords, or who, at the very least, had family mansions in London, with a host of tradesmen dependent on their custom. Charles Fox was a recognised authority among people of rank and fashion, and incomparably their prime favourite. Day after day his pen was busy, — writing to the Duke of Rutland about "Mr. Ramsden the optician, who says that he will not vote unless applied to in your Grace's name;" begging Lord Ossory to propose him at the Nomination, and enquiring whether he knew of any way of getting at Mr. Cheese, the statuary in Piccadilly; and using every endeavour to place himself in

[1] Unpublished letter from Fox to Fitzpatrick, dated Bridgewater, Sep. 1.

communication with the young Duke of Bedford, who had property of immense value within the constituency, and who owned the very ground upon which the famous Westminster Hustings were erected. Although a grandson of the nobleman who had given his name to the political connection of which Sandwich, and Rigby, were the ornaments the new duke himself was not "a Bedford." He soon became, and ever after remained, a staunch Foxite; and he is still honourably remembered as a brave friend of liberty in evil days. The ladies were interested in the election as never before, and few among them had the heart to do anything which could injure the prospects of Charles Fox. He hoped, (he said,) to prevent the Dowager Duchess of Bedford from speaking against him, even if she would not speak for him; and the Morning Post, chivalrously and prettily enough, admitted that "from the moment when the Duchess of Devonshire mounted the hustings every voter was a slave." [1]

Charles, over and above his own election, had taken upon himself the cares of another exciting contest in which he felt a sort of fatherly interest, inasmuch as the candidate whose fortunes he promoted had only just turned two-and-twenty. Many frequenters of White's and Brooks's, — and those not always the most studious and learned among them, — had been persuaded by Fox into paying their fees as Masters of Arts until the general election was past and gone; and now, in the breathless intervals of his own canvass, he found time to hunt them up, and pack them off to vote for Jack Townshend in the Senate-house at Cambridge. On the ninth of September Selwyn was informed, in a very doleful letter, that the boldest boy who ever was seen had been re-

[1] The Duchess of Northumberland, who had electioneered much in Westminster, did not know her business nearly as well as the Duchess of Devonshire. "Her Grace," said William Whitehead, the Poet Laureate, "goes most condescendingly out of her sphere, shakes every basketwoman by the hand, and tells them with a sigh that she cannot, what she wishes to do, give them meat and drink in abundance; for that, in these newfangled times, would be bribery and corruption."

turned for the University "by the help of a great number of profligate young fellows who had kept their names in on purpose." [1]

Charles Fox had plenty of aristocratic influence on his side, as well as plenty against him; but his best advocate was himself. He was the most irresistible of canvassers. He had not an atom of condescension, or of conscious affability, about him. Respecting his brother-man, and without respect of persons, he was the same everywhere, always, and to everybody. Frank and cheery, he enjoyed the sound of his own voice, and the sympathy of his company, whether he was talking to one, or to ten thousand; and he made no pretence of being indifferent to the good-will and applause of his fellows. In a letter to Edmund Burke, written during the heat of this election, he referred incidentally to the acclamations that were dinning in his ears, "for which," (he said,) "you know I have as much taste as any man;" and no one who can recall what he himself was at thirty will think any worse of Charles Fox for that honest confession. Londoners, great and small, repaired every afternoon to Covent Garden, as eagerly as to a prize-fight or a horse-race, in order to hear him flood the Market with the torrent of his oratory. A partisan of the Government has left an account of what took place on the eighth of September, the second day of the polling. "Charles Fox," wrote Dr. Warner, "keeps us all alive here with letters, and paragraphs, and a thousand clever things. I saw him to-day upon the hustings, bowing, and sweltering. A great day he has made of it. Fox 1168. Rodney 994. Lincoln 573." [2] On the eleventh of the month

[1] Thirty years afterwards Lord Palmerston became Member for the University of Cambridge. He was a Tory Minister, well liked by his political opponents; a distinguished son of the great college of St. John's, in which the strongest corporate spirit has always prevailed; and a celebrated leader of fashion in London. He was said at the time to have owed his election to "the Whigs, the Johnians, and the Dandies." The Marquises of Townshend were Johnians; and the College, (as may be seen in Gunning's *Reminiscences of Cambridge*,) was devoted to their family.

[2] Whenever The Critic was played during the Westminster Election Mr. Puff's gag at the end of the First Act was a memorandum "to support Sir

Rodney outstripped his competitors, and thenceforward always kept the first place; but it mattered little who was head of the poll as long as Lord Lincoln stayed at the bottom of it. Many electors, whose chief concern was the credit of the borough of Westminster, adopted the course of dividing their votes between the two most distinguished candidates; and, when the poll finally closed on the twenty-second of September, the numbers were 4230 for Rodney, 3805 for Fox, and 3070 for Lincoln. The town went fairly mad. After Fox had returned thanks the populace pulled the hustings to pieces, and ran away with the materials, — for which the three candidates had paid, or owed, a great deal of money. Fox was chaired, and carried in triumph through the whole of the constituency, and there was a specially exuberant demonstration at the foot of St. James's Street, just outside the main gate of the Royal Palace. Not a few of those who had voted against Fox were pleased, or at all events amused, by the result of the election. The eminent naval officer who acted as proxy for Rodney in his absence, and who shared Rodney's sentiments towards the First Lord of the Admiralty, did not even pretend to regret that Lord Sandwich's candidate had been defeated. Like a jolly sailor, he could see no reason against taking his share in the fun. "Admiral Young," (wrote a backer of Fox,) "dined with us, which we consider as an acknowledgment that Rodney was more indebted to us for support than to the Court, which was certainly true." There were other banquets to follow; but the first of them was enough for Edmund Burke. He had come up to London, and had stopped there, at his friend's disposal, as long as there was serious work to do; but he had no appetite for the festive side of politics, and he soon took himself off, with a sense of profound relief, to his farm and his library in Buckinghamshire.[1]

George Rodney in the Daily Spy, and to kill Charles Fox in the Morning Post."

[1] "The hurry of Fox's election, the business, the company, the joy, the debauch, altogether made me extremely desirous of getting out of town;

Seven fresh Barons were made in a single batch, which was a very large creation indeed in days when a peerage was still a rare distinction. A hundred and thirteen new men entered the House of Commons, most of whom were acceptable to the Court. "The Minority members," (said the Evening Post,) "have been mustered; and we are sorry to acquaint the public that their numbers will not exceed one hundred and seventy, which must leave a great majority in favour of Administration." On the last day of October the Commons assembled to choose a Speaker. Lord North, as was well within his rights, opposed the re-election of Sir Fletcher Norton; and, with less excuse, he put forward as his candidate Charles Wolfran Cornwall, in reward for having acted as a tool of the Government in their attempt to suppress the reporting of critical debates. So strong a Ministerialist, and so acute a judge, as Henry Dundas, the Lord Advocate of Scotland, acknowledged that "the dignity of Parliament, according to the general opinion, had been much let down." It would have been well, (he wrote,) if the Speakership had gone to Mr. Frederick Montagu, a respected member of the Opposition; for in his person both parties would concur in maintaining the decency and order of the House.[1] The debate was keen, and some of the speeches were grave and impressive; but Rigby scornfully repudiated the notion of introducing lofty principles of morality and patriotism into the discussion of such a topic. "As to the mighty secret," he said, "and the true cause of moving for a new Speaker by one side of the House, and supporting the old Speaker by the other, it was reducible to a very simple fact; and, when put into plain English, and stripped of the dress of eloquence and the ornaments of oratory, was no more than this: 'We'll vote for you, if you'll be for us.'" Lord North carried his man by a majority of seventy;

and I hurried off without writing to you, or to anyone." Burke to Champion; Beaconsfield, September 26, 1780.

[1] Private Letter from Henry Dundas to Mr. John Robinson; November 3, 1780.

and that division supplied an accurate measure of the relative strength of the rival parties in the new House of Commons. The general election had been a blow to the leaders of the Opposition which it required all their fortitude and patience to face.

CHAPTER XXI

THE SITUATION ABROAD. THE ROOT OF THE TROUBLE. LORD NORTH AND THE TAXPAYER.

LORD NORTH and his colleagues, to outward appearance, had emerged from the general election with a renewed lease of power for another six years to come; if indeed the lease of the British empire, as, (with such tenants in possession,) was only too probable, did not itself run out before those years had expired. Things went very smoothly for the Ministry inside the walls of parliament. The mover of the Address in the House of Lords ventured so far as to congratulate the King on his conspicuous moderation in not having employed the large military force, which was assembled in London to suppress the Gordon riots, for the purpose of destroying the civil constitution of the realm, and making himself into an absolute monarch. In the Commons an amendment was brought forward by Mr. Thomas Grenville, and supported by Fox in a speech of great length, and remarkable force of argument and explicitness of statement. "Six years ago," (he said,) "I had the honour to sit in this House when the subject of debate was precisely the same that it is this night, namely the justice and expediency of prosecuting the American war; and I make no doubt but that, if I should be sitting in the next Parliament six years hence, the same subject will still be under discussion on the first night of the first Session. We have been fighting America during six campaigns, and have gained nothing except that we have exchanged the possession of Boston for the possession of New York, and the possession of Philadelphia, the capital of Pennsylvania, for the possession of Charleston, the capital of South Carolina." That last sentence, one of those plain matters of fact in which Fox habitually

dealt, sank deep into the minds of many who then heard him for the first time; but, whatever might be the complexion of the debate, the Opposition had no chance of success in the Lobby. The Address in reply to the King's Speech was carried by a majority of three to one in the Lords, and by two hundred and twelve votes to one hundred and thirty in the Commons.

The King was pleased at having secured a House of Commons not less tractable, — and, as he hoped, much more to be depended upon, — than its predecessor; but the situation was not so simple, or so propitious to his policy, as appeared on the surface. It was true that a general election had taken place, more favourable to Ministers than, in their most sanguine hour, they had ever anticipated. That much had happened; and that was all. The plight of the nation, in all essential particulars, remained the same as before the Dissolution of Parliament; and from this moment forward it went from bad to worse without intermission, and with increasing velocity as the months succeeded each other. All through that autumn and winter the prosperity of the country was profoundly affected by the far-reaching consequences of an unparalleled disaster which had overtaken British commerce during the closing weeks of the old Parliament. The great annual caravan of West Indian, and East Indian, traders had been attended and guarded by our Channel Fleet as far south as Cape Finisterre, the North-west corner of the Spanish peninsula. There, at the exact point where any serious danger began, the admiral in command, obeying the specific orders of Lord Sandwich, turned homewards, and handed over his charge to the protection of a single vessel of the line, and two or three frigates. And so it came about that, on the ninth of August 1780, after passing the latitude of Lisbon, our trading-fleet fell into the clutches of a French and Spanish armada. The escort ran for safety. Near sixty British merchantmen, the finest of their class, — laden with cargoes of almost inestimable value, and vast consignments of military

stores for the defence of our remote colonies and dependencies, — were captured with their crews of prime sailors, with many hundreds of officers and soldiers in the service of the Crown and the East India Company, and with a multitude of passengers of every rank and calling. It was a different course of action from that pursued by Sir George Rodney as recently as the previous January, when he saw safe to their destination the victualling-ships freighted for the relief of Gibraltar, and gave Don Juan Langara's squadron, which was lying in wait to intercept them, the most exemplary beating inflicted upon the navy of any nation in the course of that long and hard-fought war. But Rodney, when he was in the neighbourhood, or in the presence, of an enemy, did not shape his naval tactics to suit the views of the Board-room at Whitehall.

The Ministerial newspapers did their very utmost to disguise and palliate the official blunder which had led up to this deplorable catastrophe. It was truly fortunate, (so their line of defence was drawn,) that the Board of Admiralty had provided no larger escort, "as the Commodore would have been tempted to fight in defence of the traders, and would have lost some of his own ships;" and it cannot be denied that it was a form of temptation to which Captain Jervis of the Foudroyant, or Captain Nelson of the Albemarle, might have been weak enough to succumb. One venal scribe used the opportunity to throw odium upon the political opponents of the Government. "It is now whispered with confidence in the City," (said the Morning Post,) "that intelligence was communicated by a cutter, under Dutch colours, to the combined fleet, where, and when, the Jamaica ships were to be found. If this be a fact, the public will have full reason to give implicit credit to the informations we have published respecting the treachery of those factious men called Patriots."

England owed the series of reverses, which from this time onwards came thick and fast upon her, not to domestic treachery, not to any falling off in the valour of

her soldiers and her sailors, but primarily and mainly to the incapacity of her rulers. Though the Ministers could manage a general election they were unequal to the conduct of a great war. In 1759 and 1760, when Lord Anson sat at the head of the Admiralty Board, and William Pitt was Secretary of State, it was said, with no large dash of hyperbole, that every change of wind blew home the tidings of a victory. But the later annals of Lord North's administration unfold a very different tale, which, even after the lapse of four generations, makes dreary reading for an Englishman. Our national efforts were immense, and our national expenditure colossal; and yet our naval and military forces were seldom in strength on the threatened spot, and at the decisive moment. The capture of our Jamaica fleet, and our Madras fleet, in European waters, was closely followed by the capture of our Quebec fleet off the Banks of Newfoundland, where some American privateers, with the countenance and support of a single American frigate, were on the watch for our unprotected merchantmen. Meanwhile our possessions in the West Indies were departing from us. Dominica, and Saint Vincent, and Grenada were taken by the French at an early period of the war. In the summer of 1781 Admiral the Comte de Grasse wrested the island of Tobago from a garrison so small in number, and so devastated by disease, that the British governor had barely enough efficient soldiers to mount sentry round the circuit of his defences. That was a crushing blow for a nascent industry of great importance to our country. Lancashire had made a rare start of late in consequence of the discoveries due to the inventive talents of Arkwright, and Hargreaves, and Crompton; and it was reckoned that the loss of Tobago, from which our principal supply of fine cotton came, condemned near twenty thousand operatives to half-work, or no work at all. As time went on Saint Christopher was surrendered to Admiral de Grasse after sharp fighting; and the same fortunate officer, — fortunate until the day when Rodney at length got a grasp at his

throat, and choked the life out of his reputation, — made easy prize of Nevis and Monserrat.

There was a very sad and shameful reason for the weakness of the British garrisons on the islands, and along the shores, of the Caribbean Sea. Seven battalions, and the wing of another, had been sent to Jamaica as the head-quarters of our military establishment in the West Indies. The men might have been kept strong and well in the high-lying region of the island, which was as salubrious a place of abode as a health-resort in the Himalaya Mountains, or on the Neilgherry Hills; but they were put to live, if live they could, in ranges of barracks on the deadly coast. Within six months eleven hundred soldiers had been laid in their graves, while half of those who survived were on the sick-list; and sickness in Jamaica, for European constitutions, was a word of ominous meaning. Our War Office and our Admiralty seemed to be unaware that any principles of sanitary science existed. In the year 1780 an attack was ordered upon San Juan, a Spanish stronghold upon the coast of Nicaragua, as notorious a death-trap as any in the Tropics. The fort was bombarded, and taken; but some months afterwards it was blown up and abandoned under circumstances which wrung the heart of England. "An expedition," wrote Horace Walpole, "against the Spanish settlements has been so totally destroyed by climate that not a single man is left alive. The officers, to the number of twenty-five, are all dead too. My pen revolts at detailing such horrors." The case was not quite what Walpole believed, but it was very bad indeed; for out of fourteen hundred men all but three hundred and twenty died by the end of September; and half of the survivors, including Captain Horatio Nelson, had been very near to death's door.

Our hold upon India, — challenged, and gravely endangered, first by the Mahrattas, and then by the growing power of Hyder Ali of Mysore, — was triumphantly re-established, with little aid from home, by the energy and genius of Warren Hastings. But there was no

Warren Hastings in the Cabinet at Whitehall. The drain upon our naval and military resources became more and more severely felt as the war went on. By the year 1779 Florida was the only province south of Canada which still remained in possession of the Crown. It was held by a handful of sickly British infantry; another handful of Pennsylvanian Tories; a horde of Indians who had been promised three pounds sterling for every hostile scalp; and a battalion of Germans from Waldeck with no personal interest in the war, and a lack of professional spirit and martial efficiency such as might naturally be expected in the army of a petty principality containing fewer inhabitants than the landed estate of more than one great English nobleman. The Commander-in-Chief at New York had intended to send a reinforcement in the shape of a fine regiment of American Loyalists, but the Royal Navy could not spare the ships to convey them. Don Bernard de Galvez, the young Governor of New Orleans, was a strenuous and intelligent warrior, not unworthy to have been born two and a half centuries back in the heroic age of his nation's history. When the Spanish war broke out he appeared upon the scene in irresistible strength; captured in succession Baton Rouge, and Mobile, and Pensacola; swept into his net the whole of their motley defenders; and occupied and retained, in the name of his Sovereign Lord, King Charles the Fifth, the entire territory of Florida.

England made few conquests in that unlucky war; and what she conquered she mostly failed to keep. The island of Saint Eustatius, and the towns of Essequibo and Demerara on the coast of Guiana, which we took from the Dutch, were re-taken by the French almost without resistance. A more notable mishap, much nearer home, had long been feared, and now attained its accomplishment. In August 1781 the Duc de Crillon came ashore on Minorca, bringing with him a hundred battering guns, and eight thousand Spanish infantry. His numbers were soon doubled by the

arrival of an equal force of Frenchmen. Port Mahon, the capital of the island, was manned by two Hanoverian battalions, and by a couple of British regiments containing, from the very first, a large proportion of invalids who ought never again to have been sent on foreign service. During several years past the soldiers of the garrison had subsisted exclusively on salt provisions, for the arrangements made to supply them with vegetables from Italy had broken down through the untrustworthiness of the agents whom our Government had selected. Sick, few, and sorry, they made so gallant a fight both upon, and outside, their ramparts that the enemy desisted from their attempt to carry the town by force, and had resort to the surer method of blockade. From that moment forward all hope was over. Scurvy put in its inevitable appearance, and the men drooped and died fast in the noisome air of the stifling casemates. No help came from England, and in the sixth month of the siege the place was surrendered. "Six hundred wasted, decrepit, figures crawled out to lay down their arms; and so pitiful was the sight, as they staggered between the ranks of the besiegers' army, that the hardest veterans of France and Spain could not conceal their compassion."[1]

These losses of territory, for the most part permanent and irrecoverable, — which began with the defection of our American colonies, and ended with the capture of Minorca, — were cruelly felt by all good patriots. But younger men, as became their years, were even more deeply affected by the lowering of the national reputation than by the material value of those provinces and islands which had passed away from beneath our rule. In August and September 1781 there was a repetition of the most alarming, and certainly the most humiliating, incident of the war. Again, as in the summer of 1779, the French and Spanish admirals showed themselves at the mouth of the British Channel

[1] Fortescue's *History of the British Army;* Volume III, page 411.

with an overwhelming force of nine-and-forty battle-ships; while again the home-fleet which the Admiralty had held to be sufficient for the protection of our shores was too low in numbers to risk an engagement in open waters, and retired to a defensive position within the roadstead of Torbay.

Fox, in a letter to Fitzpatrick, expressed what all men of spirit among his co-ævals were feeling, with a vehemence of language which needs no apology. "Dear Dick," (he wrote,) "thank you for your news, though it is the most damnable that one could have heard. I agree with you in thinking that the people of this country deserve no pity, and certainly the King still less. But is it not a little hard on us who expected to play some part upon the stage of the world, and who had certainly at least the share of individuals in the greatness of the country, to be obliged to bound our hopes, — nay, our wishes, — to being able in some way or other to heal the wounds made by others, and to put this country, which was the first in Europe, upon a footing to be one among the other nations of the world?[1] Indeed, indeed it is intolerable to think that it should be in the power of one blockhead to do so much mischief. * * * Read the speech of Richard Plantagenet in Henry the Sixth, when France is lost; and, if I do not forget, (for there is no Shakspeare here,) it is very consonant with our feelings upon this wretched situation of affairs." Fox's memory had not served him ill, for the passage in the play, with the omission of a single line, was as applicable to the England of 1781 as to the England of 1445.

> "Is all our travail turned to this effect?
> After the slaughter of so many peers,
> So many captains, gentlemen, and soldiers
> That in this quarrel have been overthrown,

[1] The headlong rush of this sentence may confuse the wording, but as to the meaning of it there can be no doubt whatever. "England," (says Fox,) "has been reduced so low by the incompetence of the Ministry that our efforts must be directed, and our hopes limited, to placing our country, so recently the foremost in Europe, on a bare equality with other Powers."

> And sold their bodies for their country's benefit,
> Shall we at last conclude effeminate peace ?
> Have we not lost most part of all the towns,
> By treason, falsehood, and by treachery,
> Our great progenitors had conquered ?"

Lost them we had, not indeed by treason and treachery, but by the improvidence and mismanagement of those who were entrusted with the custody of the empire.

The true cause of England's weakness, on sea and land alike, was to be found in the insatiable demands of the American rebellion. Historical parallels are apt to be fanciful and inaccurate; but there is a substantial resemblance between the story of George the Third in relation to his revolted Colonies, and the story of the greatest soldier, and the most able, though not the wisest, administrator whom the world perhaps has ever seen. "The terrible war with Spain," (it has been well said,) "was the canker-worm of Napoleon's fortune and power." [1] At the zenith of his career he ruled all the civilised West of the European continent with a rod of steel. He had repeatedly imposed his own conditions upon Austria. He had converted Italy, and Switzerland, and Holland, and Belgium, and the fairest districts of Germany, into so many provinces of France. He had broken to pieces within a single fortnight the highly organised military and dynastic system of Prussia; and yet he could not, with all his efforts, subdue and pacify the loosely constructed nationality of Spain. He might occupy the Spanish capital; he might rout and butcher a whole succession of Spanish armies; but he had still to reckon with the separate provinces of the Peninsula. Intensely jealous of each other, and slow to assist a neighbour who was in difficulties, those ancient subdivisions of the Spanish Monarchy possessed, one and all, an inextinguishable vitality, and a local patriotism, of its own. Over and above the army of Wellington, in

[1] *Mémoires du Chancelier Pasquier;* Volume I, page 296.

itself a formidable obstacle to success, Napoleon was perpetually in conflict with what, — in his insulting, and almost blasphemous, disregard for the rights of others, — he was pleased to call the "insurrection" of Arragon, and Galicia, and Catalonia, and Valencia, and Estremadura, and Andalusia. It was the sporadic and untiring resistance of the Spanish provinces which consumed those multitudes of French veterans whose presence at the critical moment on the battle-fields of Saxony and Silesia might have turned the tide of war, and saved the throne of Napoleon.

The case was not otherwise in America between the years 1775 and 1782. There was a national Government in Philadelphia; but it had not the predominance and prestige which were indispensable to a central authority charged with the arduous task of keeping the revolutionary movement together. The influence of Congress, great at first, dwindled gradually as the war went on; but that defect was supplemented by the fierce energy, and the singularly effective machinery, of the local administrations. The States of the Union were severally and independently governed on a system which was in conformity with their habits and traditions, and which suited their immediate needs. The American people, during every great crisis in their history, have shown themselves willing to be strongly, and even autocratically, handled by rulers whom they themselves have voluntarily placed in power. What Governor Andrew of Massachusetts, and Governor Curtin of Pennsylvania, were in the War of the Secession, that, and more than that, were Jonathan Trumbull, and William Livingston, and General George Clinton during the War of Independence. The constituents who had elected them obeyed them implicitly; and the Assemblies dutifully voted all the men and money, — or, when money had disappeared from circulation, all the supplies in kind, — for which the Governor, after consideration of the circumstances, deemed it necessary to ask. In twelve out of the thirteen States there existed a vigorous Ex-

ecutive, and a busy and outspoken House of Representatives; and in every single case the elected Governor, and the elected Assembly, were ardent for the cause of national independence; — surely a strange commentary upon the assertion, of which we have not even yet heard the last, that a large majority of the colonists were partisans of the British connection. All those established institutions, which the citizens were accustomed to respect, were skilfully and unsparingly worked in favour of the Revolution; and the adherents of the Crown soon came to be regarded in the light of insurgents against the regular and constitutional Government of their native State. It is impossible to over-rate the effect produced by that circumstance upon the public opinion of a politically minded community like the Anglo-Saxon inhabitants of North America.

Benedict Arnold, on his arrival in London towards the commencement of 1782, drew up a paper, at the personal request of King George the Third, entitled "Thoughts on the American War." He took that opportunity of expressing his surprise, in rough and earnest words, that no attempt had been made by the British Cabinet to establish the civil authority in any part of America; and he admonished His Majesty that, in a district where self-government was unwisely denied to the Loyalists, they could not, and often would not, render effective assistance to the royal cause. "An American husbandman," (wrote Arnold,) "will not lend his hand to erect a military Misrule over himself and his Friends, and put all his Property at the Discretion of an Arbitrary Police that has cut the Throat of the King's interest wherever it has been set up." That was sounder advice than anything which emanated from those fatal and flattering counsellors on the other side of the Atlantic to whom, before ever the war began, and up to the eve of its termination, the British Ministry had credulously listened. But Arnold's warning came too late; and the mischief done in the past was now beyond recall.

Most of the States had at one period or another in the course of the war been attacked by a numerous and well-appointed royal army; and some of them had been over-run, and, to all appearance, conquered and subjugated. But as soon as the invader turned his back, and relieved the neighbourhood of his presence, the Revolutionary party promptly and quietly resumed the reins of government, and began once more to employ the public resources in fostering and aiding rebellion against the Crown. Such had been the case with Massachusetts, and New Jersey, and Pennsylvania, and Rhode Island; and such was now the case with South Carolina. In June 1780, after the fall of the city of Charleston, Sir Henry Clinton, writing in perfect good faith, assured the Ministry at home that all resistance had ceased, and that South Carolina might once again be accounted a loyal colony. And yet in December 1781, after six engagements so murderous, and so valiantly and stubbornly contested, that they have earned the dignity of being ranked as pitched battles, — after numerous sieges, and an infinity of raids and skirmishes, — General Nathanael Greene had made himself undisputed master of the entire State up to the very edge of the strip of land which was commanded by the cannon on the Charleston ramparts. The duration, and the peculiar character, of the American war depleted, and almost exhausted, the military strength of England. Our available field army, whether British or German, had been marching and fighting, for six livelong years, with unvaried courage but varied fortune, over an enormous space of country, on the shortest commons, and in the most trying extremes of climate. The defence of Great Britain might indeed be left to the militia, who were fully competent to give a good account of themselves in the not improbable contingency of a French invasion; but our regular troops in the East and West Indies, and in our outlying fortresses and naval stations all the world over, had been reduced to a point that was dangerously, and sometimes ruinously, low; and, — as

was proved by the fate of Minorca, — our War Office had no expeditionary force of infantry in hand which might be despatched to the relief of a besieged and beleaguered garrison.

As with the army, so with the navy. When the French war broke out almost all our cruisers which were fit for service, whether great or small, had been stationed along a thousand miles of hostile coast, extending from the mouth of the St. Lawrence river to the mouth of Chesapeake Bay, to guard against the ravages of the American privateers; and the Board at Whitehall had very few brigs and sloops, and hardly any frigates, disposable for the protection of our commerce in European waters. The American war, moreover, made a heavy draft upon our ships of the line at a time when the Admiralty had none too many in commission. Sir William Howe, and Sir Henry Clinton, on their military expeditions up and down the coast, were always accompanied by a strong detachment of battleships; for they soon arrived at the conclusion that the sea was the only secure base of operations for a British general, — a doctrine which was confirmed in startling fashion by the experience of poor Burgoyne at Saratoga. "Where British men-of-war," (it was truly stated,) "cannot go, the Americans are, and ever will be, invincible." Moreover the safety of New York, the principal, and wellnigh the solitary, focus of the British power on the Western Continent, imperatively demanded that a British fleet should be somewhere within call. And therefore the requirements of the colonial rebellion hampered our country on water, hardly less than on land, in the prosecution of her struggle against France and Spain; and France and Spain, in the year 1781, were no longer our only enemies. We were already at open war with Holland. The international action of the Northern Powers, with Russia to prompt and direct them, had been captious and grudging almost from the very first; and, as disasters thickened upon us, their attitude became unfriendly and menacing to the last degree. It

was only too probable that England, with her rebellious Colonies still hanging at her throat, would soon be engaged in a contest for life and death with most of the great armies, and with all the formidable navies, of Europe.

Congress was kept minutely informed about the aspect of European affairs by Benjamin Franklin and John Adams, — as acute observers, and sound advisers, as ever represented their country at a foreign capital. The ordinary citizen of New England and Pennsylvania, who was a great reader and a keen politician, was not unacquainted with the diplomatic and domestic embarrassments of England, whether at the Hague, or at Berlin, or in the Baltic States, or in the Irish Parliament at Dublin; and he followed with interest the course of naval and military affairs in the English Channel, and the Bay of Biscay, and the Gulf of Mexico, and the Mediterranean and East Indian seas. In the spring and summer of 1780 a wave of depression, in some quarters akin to despair, had passed over the face of American society; but the events of the ensuing twelvemonth wrought a complete, and final, change in the elastic temper which had already become a feature of the national character. By the autumn of 1781 the people of the United States no longer regarded the future with alarm, or even with serious anxiety. They were tired of the war, and impatient to have done with it; but they were firmly resolved to lay aside their weapons on one condition only. That point had been plainly, and not very courteously, enforced in a document purporting to be an Address from the inhabitants of Connecticut to the inhabitants of Great Britain, a certain passage of which ran as follows: "To what person, or to what system of politics, you owe your present misfortunes is a matter of total indifference to America. An opinion hangs about the gentlemen of the Minority in your Parliament that America would relish measures under their Administration which she would not accept from the present Cabinet. Such distinctions are of the infancy of the argument. The Ministry, and many of

the Minority, sacrifice their time in disputing on a question with which they have nothing to do, — namely whether America shall be independent or not. Vote that she shall not be independent, and it will signify as much as if you had voted against a decree of Fate. Vote that she shall be independent, and she will be no more independent than before."

Lord North's Government held it a matter of vital importance to conceal the state of feeling which existed in America from the knowledge of our own people. In their determination to secure this object there was no excess of misrepresentation from which the Ministerial journalists shrank. At the very moment when the detection of Benedict Arnold's treachery had aroused against him a storm of hatred and contumely throughout the United States, the London public was asked to believe that the great majority of Americans were alienated from the Revolutionary cause by the harsh treatment inflicted on a brave and honoured warrior whose crime was that he had returned to his allegiance as a subject of King George. As late in the war as June 1781 it was reported that a rebel mail had been captured with most interesting letters from Washington to his confidential friends. The Revolution, (thus the story ran,) was in a deplorable situation. Twenty-two towns in Massachusetts Bay had instructed their representatives to propose a pacification with Great Britain, as they were completely satisfied with the terms of submission which the Crown was willing to accept. "From this temper of the people in the grand seat and fountain of rebellion" some judgment might be formed of the disposition of the other, and less warlike, colonies. "You would be amazed," (wrote a correspondent who professed to date his letter from New York), "to see the numbers of rebels who flock into this city from all parts, from whom we learn that Congress is broke up, and that most of the Members are returned to their houses, there to wait in hopes that a Royal Proclamation will soon be published granting a free pardon to all

who have been concerned in the rebellion, on surrendering on a certain day. This afternoon it was reported that General Washington had thrown up his commission, and returned home."

The military information from the United States supplied by the Ministerial newspapers was on a par with the political intelligence. A week seldom passed without a communication to the effect that the troops of Greene, and Washington, and Rochambeau had been brought to such a pitch of despair by misery and starvation that they were deserting by thousands; and the Bedford touch was recognisable in certain belated paragraphs, which, — after King's Mountain, and The Cowpens, and the fiery trial of valour at Guildford Court House, and the obstinate and bloody dispute at Eutaw Springs, — still persisted in asserting that the Americans of the Continental Line had on every occasion behaved like the most cowardly poltroons that ever disgraced a uniform. So spoke the inspired journalist; but he had lost his credit, and he did no good to his employers. The common sense of plain citizens was shocked, and their self-respect wounded, by the clumsy fables which were palmed off upon the intelligence of Englishmen. "We are entertained," (so one of them remarked,) "with a string of copies of intercepted letters of General Washington to, and from, other American and French generals complaining of the weakness of their respective armies. From these desponding letters we are tempted to think that *our* generals have no armies to encounter, but mere shadows and fragments of such which they might disperse, or capture, at their pleasure. What, in the name of wonder, can they be doing to let such handfuls of men, ill-clothed and worse fed, keep them at bay so long?"

By the autumn of 1781 it was no longer possible to befool and mystify English opinion. The country possessed materials for arriving at a correct judgment

more authoritative than the sham correspondence from New York which was concocted to order in the Editor's room of a London newspaper. Certain distinguished officers who had displayed enterprise and capacity in the field, and whose exploits on American soil were household words throughout England, did not disguise their conviction that the revolted Colonies could not be conquered, and that, even if conquered, they could not be maintained in permanent subjection. Among these trusted advisers were General Grey, and Earl Percy, and the Earl of Harcourt. They were aristocrats in the finest meaning of that word, — deeply, if unconsciously, imbued with a sense of their responsibilities; sharply alive to all that concerned the honour of England; and fulfilling what they conceived to be the duties of their station during peace at home, and in face of the enemy abroad. Their fellow-countrymen were not ashamed to learn a lesson from such instructors. The belief held by the great majority of honest-minded and intelligent citizens was packed into the compass of a score of words by an anonymous pamphleteer of great ability. "The war in Europe," he wrote, "and the war on the Continent of America, are distinct objects. We are not equal to both." Such likewise was the view of that stout and lifelong patriot, Horace Walpole. He had not, (he said,) knowledge or penetration enough to discover the beauty of the system which had thrown us into the American war, and which still preferred war with France, and Spain, and Holland, to the confession of our mistake.[1]

Impatience with the Government, and a weary repugnance to the wars in which our nation was engaged, pervaded every section of the community. Manufacturers, as well as those very numerous shop-keepers who depended for their livelihood upon the custom of the wage-earning class, were depressed and anxious all the island over. Yorkshire, the chief seat of British

[1] Walpole to Mann; Berkeley Square, March 30, 1781.

industry, had been reduced to extreme distress by the prostration of our foreign and colonial trade; although the calamity was ennobled, and somewhat mitigated, by mutual sympathy and good-will between employers, and those workpeople whom they did their utmost to assist, but were no longer in a position to employ. Landowners, great and small, who as a rule had lived up to the limit of their means, were hard put to it now. Rents were falling everywhere; and in the business districts of the Midland counties, and in South Lancashire and the West Riding, many landlords could not collect enough money from their tenants to pay jointures and rent-charges, and to cover the interest on their mortgages. Bishop Watson, who was a high authority upon all that related to personal income and expenditure, used to say in after-days that Lord North's American war had rendered it difficult for a man with five hundred pounds a year to support the station of a gentleman. In the House of Lords, where most of the speakers owned acres enough to know what they were talking about, it was affirmed over and over again that estates, which not long ago would have sold for thirty-five times the annual gross rental, were being offered in vain for twenty-five years' purchase, and that in some cases twenty years' purchase had been accepted under the pressure of necessity. The Land-tax remained steady at three shillings in the pound; and every successive Budget created some new impost which, directly or indirectly, added to the burdens of a territorial proprietor. Meanwhile the national liabilities were growing with frightful rapidity; and the private prosperity, which enabled the Treasury to meet those liabilities, was disappearing fast under the stress and ruin of the war. "If our trade and commerce," (said a publicist of the day,) "are once annihilated, which must be the case if we lose our West Indian islands, all the weight of the public debt, and of our immense taxes, must fall upon the land."[1] That was not what country

[1] *London Chronicle and Morning Herald* of March 1782.

gentlemen had been taught to expect when, in March 1774, they were invited to vote for the Boston Port Bill. They had walked into the Ministerial Lobby under the agreeable persuasion that, as soon as the American colonist had been forced to pay customs-duties, the British squire would be relieved of the whole of his Land-tax.

The Government succeeded in retaining its parliamentary majority during the twelvemonth which followed upon the general election. Although there were misgivings, and searchings of conscience, within the Ministerial ranks, it was early days yet for an open revolt of the party. But Englishmen, outside the House of Commons and the House of Lords, had no motive for talking and acting otherwise than as their feelings prompted. In the year 1760, when the empire was in course of being extended and consolidated by the glorious exertions of Lord Chatham, there was no sacrifice to which his countrymen, in the flush of their pride and gratitude, did not cheerfully submit. But it was quite another matter in 1781. Great numbers of our citizens deeply resented the losses and privations brought down upon themselves and their families by Lord North's policy, and they commented angrily upon minor inconveniences which would have been endured in silence if the people had had their heart in the war.

To be barred from continental travel by hostilities with France was a frequent, and a very disagreeable, experience for English people of rank in the eighteenth century. Our country supplied few foreign tourists from among the professional and commercial classes, and none at all from the classes below them; but the great world, all Europe over, was much more of a social unit then than now. An intimate freemasonry of privilege and fashion embraced France, and England, and Austria, and the Low Countries, and the leading German Courts; and fine ladies and gentlemen knew Rome, and Florence, and Turin better than they knew Oxford and Edinburgh, and were as familiar with the aristocratic quarters of Paris as with Arlington Street and Berkeley

Square. English society had always grumbled at being cooped up in our island by the perils and impediments incident to a foreign quarrel; but there was one important circumstance in which Lord North's war differed for the worse from all the other numerous wars in which our ancestors had been engaged. In 1780, and 1781, our people not only found themselves unable to travel abroad, but they were no longer secure and comfortable at home. The maritime power of Great Britain had been reduced to such a precarious condition under the auspices of Lord Sandwich that British parishes and townships bordering upon the Atlantic Ocean, and the North Sea, were in constant danger of being raided; and the Channel itself had, for the time being, become the English Channel only in name.

The Poet Laureate, writing better than he sang, informed Lord Harcourt that certain ladies at Brighton, whose names he gave, "saw fifty sail of the line pass by that coast. Fear made the greater part of them three-deckers; but they luckily turned out to be that part of the Jamaica fleet which was bound for London. I am a wicked wretch," (he went on to say,) "not to be in a violent fright, as my betters are." Later in the summer the Morning Post reported that "the beaux and belles of Brighthelmstone" had been greatly comforted when a British cruiser took up her station on the sea-front, for it had been ascertained that three privateers from Dieppe and La Rochelle were intending to pay their town a visit. Those were no idle fears. Some weeks afterwards it was announced in the newspapers that the Duchess of Devonshire, and Lord and Lady Spencer, on their return from taking the waters at Spa, had arrived safe and sound at Harwich, although their ship had been attacked on the passage by two French cutters. The enemy were beaten off by the Fly sloop, under the command of Captain Garner, after a long engagement in which an officer of the British vessel had been shot dead, and several of her crew killed and wounded; and it was allowed on all hands that the ladies had behaved

admirably.[1] Our Northern sea-board was everywhere exposed to insult. The packet which plied from Tarbet to the Western parts of Argyllshire was captured in the Sound of Isla; and the appearance of Captain Paul Jones at the mouth of the Humber raised apprehensions that he would exact reprisals for those American towns and villages which, in obedience to orders from our Government, had been destroyed by fire. A public meeting was held in the Town Hall of Hull to arrange for the protection of the river; and the Marquis of Rockingham, who was in the Chair, promised that he would himself "treat the town with a battery of Eighteen-pounders." The immediate danger was soon at an end, for a reason not flattering to our national pride; for the American commander had fought, and won, a combat so fierce and deadly that he was left too weak for further aggression. "Perhaps," wrote Lord Rockingham, "Paul Jones will go off with his prizes, — *two English ships of war.*"

Humbler people than Lord Rockingham had troubles and grievances of their own about which they complained, sometimes too loudly, in their favourite newspaper. It was a source of worry and annoyance to Londoners that the felons, who could no longer be transported to the American colonies, were imprisoned in hulks on the river. One morning the town awoke to the knowledge that seventeen of the most desperate convicts were loose on the Essex shore, with the cutlasses and blunderbusses which they had contrived to steal from their warders. A declaration from a leading brewer that the consumption of ale and porter had fallen off by twenty per cent., in a single year, caused little short of dismay in that generation of sturdy drinkers; and the activity of the Dutch and French privateers occasioned a serious disturbance in the habits of London citizens, for there was now a very poor show of fish in Billingsgate Market. The Evening Post of 1781 contains a little story, redolent

[1] The best account of the affair is in the *Morning Post and Daily Advertiser* of September 30, 1779.

of the period, purporting to come from a City tradesman who had retired from business to his rural villa, sixty miles from London. He always, (he explained,) made a point of going up to town to dine with his City Company "about Lammas, as being the best season for sea-fish. Thither I went, dressed in my light-coloured frock trimmed with silver cord, which I always wear when I pay my respects to a fine turbot. I found a wishy-washy Dutch dish called water-souchy, with an abundance of flounders, a few small soles, and a meagre quantity of trout. I was told by the Master Deputy, almost with tears in his eyes, that this abominable Dutch war had deprived us of the turbot, and that Insurance was so high that turtle was a commodity which no one cared to import."

The British people knew that there was a war in Europe, not by its glories and successes, but by its burdens and exactions; and they were beginning to be prejudiced against a militarism which they had constantly with them in its most obtrusive, and least attractive, shape. The chief sufferers belonged to a class on whose good word the popularity of Ministers has always largely depended. The barrack accommodation in Great Britain was far below the needs of the crisis, and the holders of licenses for the sale of liquor were required to lodge and feed the soldiers in return for a ridiculously small daily payment. "The men," (so one informant wrote,) "grumble if everything is not to their satisfaction. The officers' servants drink at free cost. I know two or three inn-keepers that have large families, who have fed no less than sixteen hundred soldiers in eight months; and, should the encampments be sent into winter quarters, the number that would again be imposed on these inns would be the utter ruin of their present masters." In the last month of 1779 Lord Dartmouth received a letter, requesting his interposition with the Secretary at War to remove certain of the troops at Lichfield, there being only fifty-two public-houses, of which the great majority were mere drinking-shops. Seventy men were

quartered on each of the principal taverns, while the smallest pot-houses had at least ten.[1] The Provost Marshal gave vast annoyance by carrying into practice the severities of the military code in the pleasure resorts of the metropolis. Delinquents were punished at the East end of Saint James's Park, between the Ornamental Water and the back windows of Downing Street. A paragraph in the Morning Post of 1781 stated that "the piercing cries of the unhappy wretches who are every day flogged in the Tilt Yard being found inconvenient not only to the humanity of the clerks, but to the business of the different offices in Whitehall, we are informed that orders have been given for beating the drums during these manly and soldierlike executions."[2] The ears of Londoners were tired of hearing the reports of the cannon proclaiming the capture of towns in America which could not be retained, and victories in America which decided nothing. It was said that the Ministers had been upbraiding each other for advising His Majesty to have the Tower guns, and the Park guns, fired on account of the relief of Savannah. "Lord George Germaine positively disavowed it, and seems to feel, as a man of sense, the absurdity of the proceeding. The Chancellor, mentioning it on Tuesday with astonishment to Lord Amherst, Lord Amherst assured him that he had acted under the King's immediate directions. The Lord Chancellor instantly replied, in his own manly and characteristic manner; 'Then I am sorry for it; for he ordered a damned foolish thing.'" The Chancellor, (as his forcible language indicates,) was no longer Lord Bathurst, but Lord Thurlow.

The month of August 1780 brought with it cruel and gloomy news; — news which imported the downfall of scores of respectable mercantile firms, and the wreck

[1] *Historical Manuscripts Commission;* Fifteenth Report, Appendix, Part I.

[2] A fine old Atlas of London, dated 1746, (*penes me*, as Mr. Carlyle used to say,) marks a spot just within Hyde Park, and exactly opposite the mouth of the Edgeware Road, and labels it, in matter-of-fact words, as the place "Where Soldiers are shot."

of thousands of hard-working and narrow-living households. "There never," wrote a correspondent from Portsmouth, "was known at this place such a scene of confusion as was exhibited last night and this day. Upwards of a hundred cutters, tenders, and boats were employed in pressing seamen from every merchantman and transport. On shore it was just the same. Press gangs were to be met with in every street, hauling sailors along; and all the public-houses, which seamen used, were rummaged from top to bottom. 'Tis supposed that three thousand have been taken." A similar operation was carried on at Chatham, on a similar scale; and, between nine and ten on the same evening, there commenced in the river Thames a hotter press than had been known since the beginning of the war. The gangs were reinforced by strong parties of soldiers and "no respect was shown to any one, no one being suffered to pass without being detained. Every ship was stripped of sailors, the Captain alone excepted. The reason is said to be owing to advices received of the French fleet having joined to that of Spain."

The penury and insecurity of the private citizen were in humiliating and painful contrast to the invulnerable opulence enjoyed by many holders of official incomes. A voluntary subscription, of the sort which in our day would be called a Patriotic Fund, had been started for the purpose of assisting His Majesty's Government to enlist soldiers, and defray the cost of the war. Something was contributed by the outside public; but very little indeed came from the quarter whence the most abundant help was justly and naturally expected. Disappointment and resentment vented themselves in an almost universal outcry, with no distinction of party, from the taxpayer as against the tax-consumer. The London Evening Post committed itself to a statement that above twenty of the existing Ministry, some of whom made from their places between ten and thirty thousand a year, kept their purse-strings closed to the wants of the nation. More than four hundred thousand pounds, (it

was further alleged,) were annually paid to Peers and Members of Parliament who voted with the Government, but who had not offered to raise a man, or subscribe a shilling. Even Tory newspapers found it impracticable to deny a space in their columns to letters couched in the strain in which men write when there is Revolution in the air. One individual, (so it was declared,) had received seventy thousand pounds of public money for doing nothing at all. He was now twenty-four years old; and he had been appointed a Teller of the Exchequer, on five thousand a year, at the age of ten. This fortunate youth was George Grenville the younger, son of that George Grenville who devised the Stamp Act, and thereby become the prime author of the confusion and expenditure in which the country had so long been seething. The Morning Post itself, — writing with a severity for the sake of which readers of poor Fanny Burney's Diary and Letters will forgive it much, — called attention to the havings, and the savings, of a notorious lady, the tyrant and termagant of the back regions in the Royal Household. "Mrs. Schwellenberg, the Queen's Woman, is now said to possess the following immense wealth, placed as in the underwritten description.

English Funds	£96,000
Bank of Amsterdam . . .	22,000
Ditto of Hamburgh . . .	34,000
Money and Jewels . . .	30,000
Total . . .	£182,000

Ought not this lady to throw in a single ten thousand pounds for the support of the country from which she has derived every shilling of her riches? The whole Court, and all its retainers, seem yet to consider themselves as mere foreigners, who have nothing more to do with England but just to regale upon what its liberality supplies them with."

The Prime Minister had no special love for the study of political economy; but it happened that the "Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations"

had appeared in the Spring of 1776 in the very nick of time, and its pages were turned over by Lord North, or by Lord North's private secretary, with the object of discovering new sources of taxation which might be commended to Parliament on the high and unimpeachable authority of Doctor Adam Smith.[1] But every successive twelvemonth brought with it a larger deficit; the necessities of the Treasury gradually exhausted the list of taxes suggested by the famous Glasgow professor in the Second Chapter of his Fifth Book; and Lord North was thrown back upon his own stock of financial knowledge, and his own powers of invention. His last Budget, of March 1782, was the production not of a scientific economist, but of a spendthrift Minister at his wits' end for cash. Taxes were levied indiscriminately upon a multitude of commodities, wholesome, dubious, or deleterious in their nature; on the ordinary transactions of commercial business; on the pleasures and pastimes of town-life; and on the indispensable machinery for carriage and transit which was essential to the very existence of a civilised community. Increased duties were imposed upon tobacco, beer, and brandy. More than a hundred thousand pounds a year were to be raised from soap, which was described by the Chancellor of the Exchequer as an article used by the poor, "but by no means in great quantities." Sixty thousand pounds were expected annually from the sale of common salt, while even medicinal salts were not left untaxed; and fifty thousand pounds from licenses to deal in tea,— the fatal herb which had brought about all this endless cost and trouble. Another sum of a hundred thousand pounds was to be drawn from Fire Insurances, and half as much

[1] "Lord North was on the outlook for fresh, and comparatively unburdensome, means of increasing the revenue, and obtained valuable assistance from 'The Wealth of Nations.' He imposed two new taxes in 1777, of which he got the idea there; one on manservants, and the other on property sold by auction. And the budget of 1778 owed still more important features to Smith's suggestions; for it introduced the Inhabited House Duty so strongly recommended by him, and the Malt tax." *Life of Adam Smith, by John Rae;* chapter 18.

from Bills of Exchange. The broad-wheeled waggon, which in that century performed the function of the modern goods-train, was amerced in the sum of from five to six shillings for every day's journey. Upwards of a hundred and seventy thousand pounds a year were exacted from canal-boats, and from such coasting vessels as, in their passage from one home-port to another, were fortunate enough to elude the vigilance of the French privateers. Thirty thousand pounds per annum were expected from a tax on Places of Public Entertainment; and this duty was to be collected at the entrance of the theatre by the door-keeper, with an officer of the Revenue standing over him. Five shillings was added to the price of a seat at the Opera; half-a-crown in the Boxes of Drury Lane, and Covent Garden; and, — which was a much more serious matter for the peace and order of London, — a shilling in the Pit.

Charles Fox, speaking as leader of the Opposition, refused to criticise Lord North's financial proposals, inasmuch as all, and more than all, the money for which the Government asked was urgently needed for the defence of the nation. His only wish, (he said,) was that his country might be saved; although he doubted whether the noble Lord and his colleagues were the men to save it. The Budget Resolutions were unopposed in the House of Commons; but outside Parliament they were the signal for a chorus of disapprobation which ere long swelled into a roar of animosity. The protest against the new taxes began among that class of sufferers who were accustomed to express their sentiments, real or fictitious, with artistic effect and emphasis. The whole dramatic staff was up in arms, filling the coffee-houses with angry talk, and tearing a passion to rags in the columns of the daily journals. The Stamp-officers were so scared by the popular indignation that they flatly refused to attend the Pit-door of an evening; and it was reported in the newspapers that the tax would have to be collected under the protection of a file of grenadiers. "The Solicitor General," so a paragraph ran, "is said to

have given an opinion that, if people attempt to pass the door without paying the duty, the military will be justified in firing on them, or putting those nearest to the bayonet. However, as it is meant to collect the tax by as gentle means as possible, he advises the seating of a Westminster Justice in each ticket-office, and to have the Riot Act posted up side by side with the Play Bills." Such were the perils which threatened the thrice enviable generation of playgoers who enjoyed the unique privilege of seeing the original cast of "that manager's comedy," The School for Scandal.

CHAPTER XXII

THE CITY AND THE LOAN. FOX AND THE NEW PARLIAMENT.

THE City to the east of Temple Bar, in the later half of the eighteenth century, was as large a factor as ever before or since in the sum-total of Britain's prosperity. When the American troubles commenced London already ranked as the greatest of free ports, and as a centre for the financial transactions of foreign nations. The straightforward and unfettered methods of dealing which prevailed in London, and the personal probity and self-respect of her business-men, exercised the same world-wide influence and attraction then as now; but business conditions, in some important respects, were widely different. With the colossal exception of the East India Company there was as yet very little joint-stock enterprise; and the brokers who sold and bought in The Alley, and in Threadneedle Street, numbered less than a twentieth part of the army of operators which now throngs the Stock Exchange. Nothing was quoted in the money-corner of the newspaper besides Government Funds and Annuities, and Government Lottery Tickets, and the shares of the New Navy Assurance, which was doing an extensive, and very hazardous, business in the risks of war. South Sea Stock appeared upon the list as a tribute to its historical and melancholy past; but the fortunate holders of shares, and portions of shares, in the New River Company conducted sales and purchases through the medium of their family solicitors in Gray's Inn and Chancery Lane. Our commercial system, when George the Third began to reign, was almost exclusively dependant upon

private capital, and individual management and supervision. The kings of the City were merchants and bankers of established character and renown, enthroned in offices solidly furnished with old mahogany, and a Turkey carpet worn by the feet of several generations of customers.

The City of London, from very early days, had given a strong proof of the distrust with which it viewed Lord North's colonial policy. Conspicuous among those Nonconformist ministers who had for many years past been tending steadily towards Unitarian doctrines were Joseph Priestley, and Richard Price. Doctor Price had thought much, and had written sparingly and weightily, about the national finances; and he gradually came to be recognised as the first living authority on that all-important subject. He knew, and no man better, that public solvency is the fruit and outcome of careful and cautious statesmanship; and he gravely disapproved the action of the Cabinet with reference to America. His opinion was shared by Doctor Priestley, who had been an intimate friend of Benjamin Franklin, and who lived with Lord Shelburne, in town and country, — an honourable client of a great house, — pursuing his scientific studies in the laboratory, and superintending the education of his patron's son. In the year 1776 Doctor Price issued a pamphlet entitled "Observations on the Nature of Civil Liberty, and the Justice and Policy of the War with America." So eagerly was it read, not by politicians only, that sixty thousand copies were sold over the counter in a few months; and the demand for it was briskest among the class which had the largest stake in the welfare of commerce. Doctor Price was complimented by being voted the Freedom of London; and he testified to his gratitude in a supplementary pamphlet dedicated to the Right Honourable the Lord Mayor, the Aldermen, and the Commons of the City.

Price's book was assailed from many quarters; but he had said his say, and he thenceforward held his peace, except when he made an example of one or

another member of the bench of bishops who attacked him with small respect for the amenities of controversy. William Markham, the Archbishop of York, did not hesitate, — in a missionary sermon, of all places, — to invoke the aid of the secular arm against what he regarded as the diffusion of seditious opinions. "The laws against Papists," (said his Grace,) "have been extremely severe; and, if at any time another denomination of men should be equally dangerous to our civil interests, it would be justifiable to lay them under similar restraints." Markham, when he uttered this threat, was strangely out of sympathy with the general feeling of his countrymen, as was soon made evident in a striking manner. Ever since the first year of William and Mary the immense majority of English Dissenters had been exempted from the operation of the penal laws against Nonconformity. Baptists, and Independents, and Presbyterians who adhered to the tenets of their old creed, were free to preach, and to teach in school, without coming into collision with the civil magistrate. The Quakers enjoyed the same privileges on even easier terms; but the Toleration Act of 1689 had been so drawn as to exclude from its protection honest Unitarians who were unwilling to subscribe the first five of the Thirty-nine Articles. Doctor Price might not address his congregation in Hackney, and Doctor Priestley might not give a lesson in chemistry to young Lord Fitzmaurice, without bringing themselves inside the scope of the Five Mile Act, and the Conventicle Act, and all the rest of the barbarous Statutes which dated from the Cavalier Parliament of the Restoration. In March 1779, at the very height of the American war, a Bill, framed with the express object of remedying that monstrous injustice, was introduced into Parliament. The names of Price and Priestley were quoted in debate, with marked respect, as conclusive arguments in favour of the proposal; and an Act for the Relief of Protestant Dissenters, — among whom they were by far the most eminent, — was carried against only six objectors

in the Commons, and with silent unanimity in the Lords.

Commercial men in London had been deeply impressed by a passage in the "Observations on Civil Liberty" which called attention to the character, and the volume, of the British trade with America. "Our American colonies," wrote Doctor Price, "particularly the Northern ones, have been for some time past in the happiest state of society. Old countries consist generally of three classes of people, — a Gentry, a Yeomanry, and a Peasantry. The colonies consist only of a body of Yeomanry, supported by agriculture, and all independent, and nearly upon a level; in consequence of which, joined to a boundless extent of country, the means of subsistence are procured without difficulty." The population of those colonies, (so he went on to say,) had increased with enormous rapidity; and the trade had increased even faster than the population on account of the spread of comfort, and the gradual introduction of luxury. British exports to the American colonies had grown fivefold in the course of thirty years; and it was not only an expanding trade, — certain, constant, and uninterrupted, — but it was a trade in which we had no rivals. "This inestimable prize," said the author, "and all the advantages connected with America, we are now throwing away. Experience alone can show what calamities must follow. It will indeed be astonishing if this kingdom can bear such a loss without dreadful consequences; — our Empire dismembered, our strength exhausted, our merchants breaking, our manufacturers starving, our debts increasing, the revenue sinking, the Funds tottering, and the miseries of a public bankruptcy impending."

All this had been predicted in the spring of 1776, and all this was coming to pass in the autumn of 1781. England, in one respect, did not contend on equal terms with France. "France," said Edmund Burke, "contains all within herself. She has natural advantages. She can rise soon after severe blows. England is an

artificial country. Take away her commerce, and what has she?"[1] In the sixth year of the American war, and the third year of the French war, that commerce was already on the verge of ruin. Doctor Price had forewarned his readers that American merchantmen, rendered useless for traffic, and many hundreds in number, would be turned into ships of war. His prophecy was fulfilled to the letter. A naval historian of authority has recently calculated that, in all probability, more than two thousand American vessels were employed in privateering during the Revolution.[2] Our business interests in the Western hemisphere had suffered almost to extinction. The Mediterranean Sea was a closed water to our merchants. The commercial activity of the City was only kept alive by our trade with the East Indies; and the East India trade itself was now in serious jeopardy.

Our grasp upon Hindostan was precarious so long as Capetown, that halfway house to Calcutta and Madras, remained in the possession of an unfriendly tenant; and accordingly, in March 1781, a British expedition started from Spithead for the southern point of Africa. Five ships of the line, besides frigates and smaller vessels, and transports with a considerable number of troops on board, were entrusted to the charge of Commodore George Johnstone, (commonly known as Governor Johnstone,) who as a sailor had a poor record at the Admiralty, but who was a politician after the First Lord's own heart. The affair was deplorably bungled. On the sixteenth of April Johnstone, who was watering at Porto Praya, in the Cape de Verde Islands, allowed himself to be surprised at his anchorage by a French squadron under the command of Monsieur de Suffren. The English defended themselves successfully in a fierce and confused action; but the ultimate result of the whole business was that Johnstone, who had sailed

[1] *Recollections by Samuel Rogers;* page 83 of the Edition of 1859.
[2] *A Naval History of the American Revolution by Gardner W. Allen; Houghton, Mifflin, and Company, 1913;* Volume II, page 663.

from Europe ten days before Suffren, reached the neighbourhood of Simon's Bay a fortnight behind him. A strong force of French infantry had been sent on shore at Capetown, and the colony, in the judgment of the British Commodore, had been rendered secure against attack; although a naval officer of a higher order might have taken a very different view of the possibilities. After staying long enough on the coast to make prize of several Dutch East Indiamen Johnstone returned, rich and inglorious, to England, and to the more congenial occupation of a series of lawsuits against one of his own post-captains. "The discredit of the surprise," (writes Admiral Mahan,) "was not redeemed by any exhibition of intelligence, energy, or professional capacity on the part of the officer in charge. It has been said that he never commanded a post-ship before he was intrusted with this very important mission, and it is reasonably sure that his selection for it was due to attacks made by him upon the professional conduct of Keppel and Howe, when those admirals were at variance with the Administration. His preposterous mismanagement, therefore, was probably not wholly bitter to the Navy at large." Such was the spirit of discord and partisanship which, after ten years of Lord Sandwich, had infected with its baleful influence the most generous-hearted and fraternal of services.[1]

No ray of hope, from any quarter of the horizon, lightened the gloom which enveloped the commercial world of London. Legitimate and normal business was at a standstill; but vast gains were being made, at the expense of the taxpayer, by people whom no respectable firm in the City would have dreamed of admitting into partnership. The class of personages who throve upon the war has been described by a witness with unique opportunities for observation, whose words carry weight.

[1] *Major Operations of the Royal Navy, 1762–1783, by A. T. Mahan.* This important fragment of history forms the Thirty-first chapter of *The Royal Navy, by William Laird Clowes,* pages 353 to 564 of the Third Volume.

Sir George Rodney, after his return to the West Indies from a visit to New York, addressed a very long and important despatch to Lord George Germaine.[1] The letter was not a model of composition; but Rodney, in the cabin of his flagship, could not be expected to find time for trimming and polishing his sentences. "Nothing," wrote the Admiral, "but the natural affection an Englishman bears, or ought to bear, to his King and country irritates my mind when I behold her treasures squandered, her arms inactive, and her honour lost, and by the very men entrusted with the most important and honourable confidence of their Sovereign and his Ministers, — paying not the least regard to the sufferings of their country, but retarding the completion and extinction of the rebellion to make the fortunes of a long train of leeches, who suck the blood of the State, and whose interests prompt them to promote the continuance of the war, such as Quartermasters and their deputies, *ad infinitum*, Barrack masters and their deputies, *ad infinitum*, Commissaries and their deputies, *ad infinitum*, all of which make princely fortunes and laugh in their sleeves at the Generals who permit it, and by every means in their power continue to discountenance every active measure, and, instead of having an idea of concluding this unhappy war, their common discourse turns upon what may occur in the two or three ensuing campaigns."

The gang of depredators at whom Admiral Rodney discharged this broadside of anger and disgust were still pursuing their tactics on the western shore of the Atlantic Ocean; but people who resembled them in all essential points had long been familiar figures in the City of London. Supporters of Lord North, most of whom were not business-men at all in any proper sense of the term, obtained contracts for the supply of provisions, and liquor, and clothing, and for the transport of troops

[1] Sir George Rodney to Lord George Germaine; St. Lucia, December 22, 1780. *Report on the Manuscripts of Mrs. Stopford Sackville, of Drayton House, Northamptonshire;* Volume II.

by sea, — contracts which they either under-sold to a deputy, or carried out themselves with disastrous effects upon the comfort and health of our soldiers and sailors. It was impossible for any private individual, without incurring the risk of an action for libel, or a criminal information laid by the Attorney General, to discuss in print those secret transactions which were conducted in the recesses of the War Office and the Admiralty; but the time was approaching when a flagrant scandal, which every one could understand, and on which every one was at liberty to comment, was dragged by skilful and resolute hands into the light of day.

On the seventh of March 1781 the Prime Minister, in discharge of his function as Chancellor of the Exchequer, rose to unfold his Budget. Its main feature was a borrowing operation which, (for those times,) was of enormous magnitude, and of some complexity. Every subscriber of a hundred pounds was to receive a hundred and fifty pounds in Three Per Cent. Consols, as well as twenty-five pounds in the Four Per Cents; and every subscriber of one thousand pounds was entitled in addition to four tickets in a Lottery, nominally worth twenty shillings apiece. Lord North ended by moving that, "towards the Supply granted to His Majesty, the sum of £12,000,000 be raised by a Loan, and £480,000 by way of Lottery." Every one who has sat at Westminster is aware of the effect produced upon the House of Commons when a Minister presents an elaborate scheme of finance or legislation, with plausible glosses, and judicious reticences, to an audience which has no leisure to think the details out; and no parliamentary veteran can ever forget those rare occasions when a trusted and keen-witted member of the Opposition, speaking on the spur of the moment, analyses and criticises the proposals of the Government as minutely and confidently as if he had the Bill lying in print on the Table before him, and commits himself and his party, then and there, to a decided course of action.

No sooner had Lord North handed in his Resolution

to the Chairman of Ways and Means than Charles Fox was on his feet. He began very quietly, and maintained the same tone throughout "a speech of great length, in which, along with his usual ability, he displayed such a fund of financial knowledge as seemed to excite surprise."[1] The first half-hour was devoted to a marvellously lucid exposition of his objections to the substance of the plan. By "a chain of arithmetical reasoning," in which Burke subsequently told the House of Commons that he could not detect a flaw, Fox upheld the principle that, at a time of pressure when five per cent., in one shape or another, had to be given for money, it was much better to face the situation boldly and frankly, and to issue a five per cent. stock rather than a stock which bore only an interest of three per cent. When the country was again at peace, and the present distress had passed away, and when the Treasury was able to pay off its obligations at par, the holders of the Three Per Cents, who had bought below 60, would make forty per cent. on their money. That, however, was a matter of the far future, involving problems in regard to which political economists were not altogether in agreement; but there were other aspects of the transaction of instant and pressing concern to public morality, and to the honour of the House of Commons. It was notorious that a loan, exceeding the amount of that for which the Treasury asked, would have been willingly and promptly undertaken, on a much smaller margin of profit, by the established and hereditary banking firms of London; whereas the mass of these shares, (so Fox declared,) had been allotted to individual members of parliament who for the most part had no connection with trade or finance, and who never showed their faces in the City except when they had occasion to borrow money for themselves. The Noble Lord had not remarked, and most certainly had not insisted, on the significant fact that the shares in the new loan had already mounted up to a selling value which placed an

[1] *History of Europe in the Annual Register for 1781;* chapter 10.

excessive amount of gain in the pockets of the original subscribers. "The profit," said Fox, "on the loan now proposed, in every way I have been able to take it, and subject to every probable contingency, is nine hundred thousand pounds; and this large sum of money is in the hands of the Minister, to be granted to members of that House as compensation for the expense of an election, or for any other corrupt influence which might suit his views. Nine hundred thousand pounds is there, — to be given away in *douceurs* of a loan, not merely from the effect of an idle and wanton extravagance, but as a means of procuring and continuing a majority in the House of Commons on every question, and giving strength and support to a bad Administration."

Next day the House met in great excitement, and with full and accurate information about what had taken place in the City during the interval. The case grew blacker and blacker as the afternoon wore on, and it was clearly shown that Fox had in no way overstated the gross amount of which the nation had been plundered. One member reported that "Omnium was that day done so high as from nine to eleven per cent. in the Alley." Another asserted in plain language that one half of the loan had been distributed among Lord North's adherents, "which at nine per cent. was bestowing six hundred thousand pounds of the public money on members of parliament." No serious attempt was made to confute these allegations. Henry Dundas, the Lord Advocate for Scotland, — with that cynical impudence which sometimes amused, and sometimes shocked and offended, the House of Commons, — contended that it was nonsense to talk of favour having been shown to supporters of the Government, because many of them, so far from being gratified, were discontented at not having received enough. "The constant salutation," he said, "that I meet from the friends of the Ministers is; 'It is damned hard. I have only got ten thousand pounds.'" That was a curious line of defence for a Minister to adopt. The title of each individual to

his share of the booty was adjudicated upon, in the last resort, by the Patronage Secretary of the Treasury, who, (as one of the speakers expressed it,) "stretched forth a healing hand to the needy Member." Mr. John Robinson, during those trying weeks, did much to earn the extravagant emoluments which were bestowed upon him as the most hardly worked, and certainly the most indispensable, member of a remarkable Administration.[1]

The fight against corruption was kept up, almost without intermission, until near the end of March. Burke protested, gravely and wrathfully, against the establishment of a Lottery as demoralising to the private citizen, and as flat robbery of the nation, inasmuch as the Loan could have been raised without it. County members were told to beware of what they were doing, because the four hundred and eighty thousand pounds which this superfluous, and worse than useless, Lottery cost the State was equal to a shilling in the pound of the Land-tax. Fox spoke again and again, with increasing warmth, and with sustained forcefulness and sagacity. Savile lent what Lord Stanhope justly calls "all the weight of his unsuspected independence" to the cause of purity; and a leading part was taken by Mr. George Byng, one of the members for Middlesex, and the nearest neighbour to the City of London among those great country gentlemen who prided themselves upon the careful management of their paternal estates, and who entertained a profound contempt for jobs and jobbers.[2] The rank and file of the Ministerialists were

[1] Mr. Robinson was paid, in salary and perquisites, as large an annual stipend as a modern Secretary of State; and the same income was worth double then what it is worth now. He likewise had the reversion of a post in the Customs for himself and his son-in-law, a valuable grant of Crown property at a nominal rent, and the promise of a pension of a thousand pounds per annum. He describes in a private letter how he told Lord North that his place brought him in five thousand a year. His Lordship, (wrote Robinson,) "was so good as to say that I had earned it all, and that, if I went out, he must and would go; for he could not do business with any one else." That letter may be read in the Abergavenny Papers.

[2] In an interesting letter of April 1780 Burke referred to the hatred of peculation, in all its forms, which prevailed among landed proprietors,

seldom present on the benches during a debate in which they were likely to hear very little good about themselves; but, on a given signal, they flocked in from the adjacent coffee-houses, and crowded the bar of the House in order to force on a division by clamour. Their conduct during those three weeks drew down upon them a crushing, and, — to the party whose votes had placed him in the Chair, — a most unexpected rebuke from Mr. Speaker Cornwall.[1] The whole question of the Loan was vigorously thrashed out, and thoroughly sifted, in the House of Commons; but the Marquis of Rockingham found something fresh to say about it in the Lords. He had been, (he remarked,) of an age to turn his attention to public affairs during the last glorious war, and could therefore avouch for the truth of what he was going to assert. When a Chatham was at the head of our councils, and an Anson at the head of our navy, no aid was wanted from corrupt influence. "The influence of Ministers in that day arose from a well-founded confidence in the wisdom of their measures; in their spirited and vigorous plans, happily executed; and in an able and faithful disbursement of the public money committed to their management." For the sake of that sentence, and of the genuine conviction and sincerity with which it was uttered, Lord Rockingham well deserved to be the next Prime Minister.[2]

The circumstances connected with the Loan of March 1781 finally extinguished such popularity as the Ministry still retained among the trading classes of London.

whether Whig or Tory. "Public economy," he wrote, "meets the ideas of most who have anything of the old feelings of country gentlemen left. They have a natural antipathy to inordinate gain in anybody."

[1] *Parliamentary History;* Volume XXII, pages 46 and 47. The Speaker's words are well worth reading.

[2] Historians, whatever their sympathies and proclivities, give only one account of this amazing transaction. Mr. Lecky estimates that the "country was compelled to pay nearly a million more than was necessary;" Sir Erskine May writes of Lord North with well-informed severity of judgment; and Lord Stanhope, though he says little about it, is all in the same story.

There seldom had anywhere been a less welcome influx of visitors than the procession of Members of Parliament who came eastwards along the Strand to put themselves in communication with a broker, and take the profit on their shares. These interlopers were regarded by commercial people of the old school with the feeling of the professional towards the amateur, and the honest man towards the adventurer. But there were deeper and more permanent causes for the dissatisfaction with Lord North's Government which prevailed among London citizens. If the naval war with France, and Spain, and Holland, and America lasted a couple more years the consequences might well be too serious for words, even though the Northern Powers refrained from taking part against us; for it was as certain as fate that London merchants, and shipowners, and underwriters, — and, after a while, the shop-keepers, — would be brought to the ground by hundreds, and then by thousands. That was not all; nor was that the worst. The financial credit of Great Britain had already fallen so low that, (as Edmund Burke reminded the House of Commons,) the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in order to raise twelve millions of money, had added twenty-one millions to the capital debt of the country.[1] The price of Consols, which was a measure of the borrowing power of the Treasury, was shrinking, and the borrowing necessities of the Government were increasing, at a portentous rate; and thoughtful men were already uneasy about the ultimate effect upon national solvency. The citizens of London felt the distress, and foresaw the danger; but they were helpless to remedy the one, and prevent the other. Political power they had next to none. It was true that they sent to Parliament four members who duly walked into the Lobby against the Government at every stand-and-fall division; but those four votes were balanced by the votes of the so-called representatives of any two among a score of proprietary

[1] *Parliamentary History;* Volume XXI, page 1347.

boroughs, and decaying villages, in Cornwall. The Liverymen of London, however, did not altogether lack the means of making their opinion known; for the Corporation possessed the exceptional privilege of approaching the Throne with an Address which the monarch, by ancient usage, was bound to receive in person. Of all his regal duties this was the one which George the Third enjoyed the least; for the Fathers of the City, whenever they had a grudge against the Court, never failed to make the most of their opportunity. They would not so much as congratulate their Sovereign on an addition to his family without "begging leave, even in our present calamitous situation, to express joy in the birth of another prince." As the months rolled forward, and the crowd of official mistakes and public misfortunes thickened, King George had to listen to sharper and sharper remonstrances, couched in less and less deferential terms, against the policy of his Ministers, and their management of the war. He liked those lectures none the better because he recognised in them the traces of a very well-known literary style, and more than suspected Mr. Chamberlain Wilkes of having had a hand in their composition.

Stress and peril were no unusual features in England's history. Twice during that same half-century our country was reduced to the extremity of danger, and yet the Ministers who then swayed her counsels exerted a dominant, and almost undisputed, power over the loyalty and enthusiasm of Parliament. Such was the case with the elder Pitt when in 1757 he took over the responsibility for the French and Spanish war, and with the younger Pitt in the awful crisis of the struggle with Bonaparte. Those statesmen, both father and son, were possessed by a single-minded belief in the wisdom and necessity of their own policy, and were able to communicate to others that high-souled confidence which they felt themselves. But a pilot cannot

be trusted to weather the storm when he is conscious that he is running straight for the rocks; and Lord North, in those secret letters and conversations in which he disclosed his whole mind, freely confessed that he had embarked upon a fatal course from which there was no certain, or even probable, issue.

Some of the most respectable, but not the most formidable, of the Ministers who originally set on foot the attempt to coerce America very soon began to repent the action which they had taken; but they found themselves utterly powerless to undo the meshes of the net wherein they were entangled. A statesman of unblemished character belonging to a later generation, who was thoroughly conversant with official life behind the scenes, once had occasion to explain that his influence went for little in the government of the nation. "I have not," he said, "either great talent, or ill-temper; so that nobody cares for me."[1] That was pre-eminently the case with Viscount Barrington, the Secretary at War in Lord North's Government, and with Earl Gower, the President of the Council. They were bullied inside the Cabinet by Sandwich, and outside the Cabinet by Rigby; and, if ever they showed signs of independence, they were effectually cowed and cajoled by the most vigilant and strong-willed of monarchs. But their consciences were wounded to the quick, and their existence had become a burden to them. As early as October 1775 Lord Barrington commenced asking to be relieved from office, and in December 1778 he at last prevailed upon the King to accept the resignation which he had repeatedly proffered. Lord Gower left the Ministry in the following November, and seized the first opportunity of letting his brother peers into his confidence. He had presided, (as he told the House of Lords,) for some years at the Council Table, and had seen such things pass there of late that no man of honour and

[1] So Lord Althorp told Sir John Hobhouse in the year 1833.

conscience could any longer sit there.[1] Lord Gower had sacrificed much, but at all events from that moment forward he was able to call his soul his own. The example of his retirement from office aroused the admiration and envy of no less a personage than the Prime Minister, and Lord North placed the King in possession of his sentiments and convictions in as frank a letter as a subject ever addressed to a Sovereign. "Lord Gower," (he wrote,) "came to Lord North to inform him that he had long felt the utmost uneasiness at the situation of His Majesty's affairs; that nothing can be so weak as the Government; that nothing is done; that there is no discipline in the State, the army, or the navy; that he feels the greatest gratitude for the many marks of Royal goodness which he has received, but that he does not think it the duty of a faithful servant to endeavour to preserve a system which must end in the ruin of His Majesty and of the country. * * * In Lord North's arguments with Lord Gower Lord North owns that he had certainly one disadvantage, which is that he holds in his heart, and has held for these three years, just the same opinion as Lord Gower."[2]

Lord North made frequent and desperate efforts to escape from his bondage; but he was always caught, and brought back to captivity. His chains were heavy and irksome, but richly gilded. In June 1778 the

[1] *Parliamentary History;* XX, 1176.

[2] Lord North's correspondence with his father, the Earl of Guildford, — when he himself was a man in middle life, and Prime Minister of England, — bore a singular resemblance to the letters written home by a sensitive boy who is exceedingly unhappy at school. "Indeed, my Lord, I am almost worn out with continual fretting. It may very possibly be that my uneasiness proceeds from my own faults; but the fact is that so long a continuance in a situation which I dislike, and for which I am neither adapted by temper or capacity, has sunk my spirits, weakened my understanding, impaired my memory, and filled my heart with a kind of uneasiness from which nothing can deliver me but an honourable retreat. I am sorry to say that I do not foresee when that happiness will fall to my lot." So North wrote to the Earl of Guildford from Downing Street in August 1777, and he was still writing to him in the same way as late as April 1781.

King, without solicitation on the part of North, conferred upon him an honourable and coveted office with a splendid revenue, the use of a pleasant seaside residence, and the lightest of duties. His combined emoluments as First Lord of the Treasury, Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Warden of the Cinque Ports henceforward exceeded twelve thousand pounds a year. Not many months previously, when North was embarrassed by debt, there reached him from Kew a most delicate and gracious letter. "I must insist," (the King wrote,) "that you will now state to me whether twelve or fifteen thousand pounds will set your affairs in order. If it will, — nay, if twenty thousand is necessary, — I am resolved that you shall have no other person concerned in freeing them than myself." George the Third, when he desired to please, merited the compliment which Samuel Johnson paid him. "Sir," said the Doctor, "they may talk of the King as they will; but he is the finest gentleman I have ever seen." The binding effect of these material benefits upon the Prime Minister's allegiance was enforced by a system of pitiless, and not very scrupulous, moral pressure. The King's letters, at every serious political conjuncture, were profuse in emotional appeals to Lord North's fidelity and attachment, and warm expressions of an affectionate interest in his health and happiness which, for the time being, was sincerely felt. But beneath that fair surface of intimacy and friendliness the stern and resolute temper of an inexorable taskmaster was plainly visible. Many years afterwards, — when North had become blind, and was living in retirement, the most patient and sweet-tempered of invalids, — a friend read aloud to him one of Burke's pamphlets which commented unfavourably upon his conduct in the American war. "Mr. Burke," he remarked, "did not know that, year after year, I entreated to be allowed to resign; but I was not allowed, and was earnestly entreated to remain."

Lord North was a very poor dissembler. He wore

the mask awkwardly, and it had long ago got abroad that he had no relish for the policy which he was condemned to advocate. The King was perfectly well aware of what was amiss with his spokesman in the Commons. "I know you complain," wrote His Majesty to North, "that the House does not attend to your wishes; but your own candour must also convince you it is impossible your ideas can be followed whilst you have not yourself decided the part you mean to take." It was not in the nature of things that a leader with a scanty belief in the justice, and no belief whatever in the wisdom, of his cause, should exercise a guiding and inspiring influence over the opinions of political mankind. The Prime Minister, (to employ a simile borrowed from a sport which was in high favour among his contemporaries,) was like a spiritless game-cock that had to be driven back into the ring after every round of the battle. During the first sessions of that new parliament Lord North could rely upon Mr. John Robinson to secure him a majority upon a division; but he had no chance in debate against Charles Fox, — an adversary who was his superior in oratorical and dialectical power; who, though he fought fairly, always fought to win; and who had a clear and intense conception of the objects towards which his efforts were directed. Fox was firmly and unalterably persuaded that the government had been conducted, (to quote the exact phrase used by Lord North himself in his letter to the King,) "on a system which must end in the ruin of His Majesty and the country." Things had been brought to such a pass that the safety of England was now the paramount concern of Parliament. It had become a matter of pressing necessity to terminate the quarrel with America, and to use the whole of our strength and resources against France, and her European allies, with a vigour and directness which had hitherto been lamentably wanting.

That was the creed of Charles Fox; and the House of Commons was in a mood to hear his exposition of it

with a strong bias towards approval and acceptance. There were patriots inside the walls of Parliament who felt the national distress as keenly and sadly as any sorrow or trouble which could befall themselves. "I am much at a loss," wrote Gibbon, "what to say about Mr. Eliot. He is certainly very far from being in a good state of health or spirits; but I am not Physician enough to distinguish between the influence of the body, and that of the mind. He feels for the public with the most exquisite sensibility, and all his sentiments are of the painful kind." Mr. Eliot belonged to the Opposition; but there were not a few gentlemen in the Ministerial ranks who were well aware of their responsibilities as members of the governing class, and who were prepared in the last resort, at the sacrifice of their party allegiance, to rescue England from her impending ruin. The family letters of Lord North's adherents, and even the unofficial correspondence of certain among the Ministers, testify to the existence of deepening anxiety, and growing dissatisfaction. "The cry of all Englishmen," (wrote one supporter of the Government to another,) "is for some head to lead. The internal confusion and want of resolution in the Ministry, to decide and execute, makes all mankind execrate the present set." George Selwyn, a veteran of the Lobby, who himself always voted as the Secretary of the Treasury bade him, reported to the Viceroy at Dublin Castle that a Motion was next day to be made by Charles Fox which might command assent among friends of the Government who had hitherto been in favour of the American war. "People," he went on to say, "now seem by their discourse to despair of that cause more than ever. There has been wretched management, disgraceful politics, I am sure. Where the principal blame is, the Lord only knows. In many places, I am afraid."

The date of that letter was the eleventh of June 1781. On the morrow Fox moved for a Committee of the Whole House to take into consideration the present

state of the American war, and he intimated his intention of asking that Committee to pass a Resolution to the effect that "His Majesty's Ministers ought immediately to take every possible measure for concluding peace with our American colonies." The discussion, which was admirably sustained from first to last, fills eighty pages of the Parliamentary History, and it was opened and closed by Charles Fox with speeches which, when read together, covered the whole political, diplomatic, and military situation in every quarter of the world. His motion was defeated by a large majority; but his words had not fallen on unheeding ears. After Parliament re-assembled in November 1781 Fox enforced his views in a succession of weighty and convincing, and most characteristic, orations. He once told Lord Grenville, — or, it may be, told some one who told Lord Grenville, — that he never was afraid of repeating himself, but that he took good care "to hammer it into them;" and, compared with all other debaters, his hammer was as the hammer of Thor. Refusing to spend his time over minor or collateral issues he returned again and again to the central facts, and the vital aspects and considerations, with an insistence which would take no denial. But, whether he was dealing with the needs of the present, or with the history of the past, he could never weary his audience; and nothing is more certain than that the House of Commons was always excited and expectant when Charles Fox rose to his feet, and always sorry when he arrived at the unstudied, but apt and telling peroration which clenched his argument. "The best speaker," (said Henry Grattan,) "whom I ever heard was Fox in the American war, — Fox in his best days;" and a still more remarkable testimony even than Grattan's may be found in one of George Selwyn's carelessly packed, but richly freighted, sentences. "What should, or could, I add," (wrote Selwyn,) "to the account which the papers now give of the debates? Charles is, for my part, the only one I can bear to hear; but, although it is impossible for him to do anything but

go over and over again the same ground, and make the same Philippics, I can hear him, (which is a singular thing,) with the same pleasure and attention as if I gave ample credit to what he said, with such talents, and with such good humour, as is at the bottom of all that pretended acrimony." When it is remembered that the success of Charles Fox and his party would be fatal to Selwyn's tenure of those heterogeneous sinecures on which he had subsisted in comfort and luxury for thirty years past, it must be admitted that a higher, and more impartial, compliment can seldom have been paid to the charm of an orator.

Such were the speeches by which Charles Fox converted a hostile senate to his own way of thinking about the American war. In one important respect it was a changed House of Commons from the last. Nothing, in all his experiences of exile, had been more of a surprise and shock to Samuel Curwen, the Massachusetts Loyalist, than his first sight of what he described as "that assembly of untutored, inexperienced youths, (for half I believe have not seen thirty,) which is called the Parliament of Great Britain, or the great council of the nation."[1] But there are periods in the history of every society when youth has its advantages. At a time when nobler beliefs, and higher aspirations, are abroad in the air, it is the young who are the first to be affected by their influence; and, at the commencement of the last quarter of the eighteenth century, in that restricted circle of families which ruled England, the children were often better than the fathers. The last general election, and those bye-elections which followed close upon it, had brought forward a number of heirs to great fortunes, and younger sons of exceptional promise, who entered Parliament with an intention to think for themselves, to act in accordance with their own convictions,

[1] Curwen's estimate of the age of Members is probably guess-work; but that age was undoubtedly lower then than now. The average time of life in a recent House of Commons, then drawing near to a Dissolution, was ascertained to be forty-eight years.

and, (above all, and before all,) never to finger the wages of corruption. They were repelled by the political cynicism, and the senile dissipation and profligacy, of Sandwich and Rigby; and they were irresistibly attracted by the private character, and the public conduct, of Savile, and Burke, and Camden, and Rockingham. They recognised in this group of statesmen an ideal of patriotism that appealed to their respect and admiration. It was the same ideal which long afterwards was carefully defined by a gallant soldier and politician of the War of Secession in America. "My country," said General Carl Schurz; "my country right or wrong! If right, to be kept right. If wrong, to be set right." Some of these young fellows had a shining and useful career before them, and all of them came from old political houses, — Yorkes, and Townshends, and Ponsonbys, and a new generation of Cavendishes; and the William Grenville who was Pitt's right-hand man during the most arduous years of his first long government; and the Viscount Althorp who, as the second Earl Spencer, became the greatest civil administrator of the Navy that ever sat at Whitehall. There was one bright face missing in the ranks of Opposition. Lord Robert Manners, a son of the heroic Marquis of Granby, had won a seat in Cambridgeshire; but he now was far away from Palace Yard, fighting his country's battles in the West Indies. He met his death in that victory off Dominica which was an epoch in the science of naval tactics, and a turning-point in the revival and re-establishment of Great Britain's naval supremacy. The vessel which he commanded, as a Post-captain of four-and-twenty, broke the enemy's line behind, but not far behind, the flag-ship which carried the senior Member for Westminster. On that glorious day, if they had chanced to think of it, Manners might have paired with Rodney.

During the first Christmas recess of that parliament William Pitt was brought in for the borough of Appleby; and never did a new member receive a more cordial welcome from all his colleagues. He spoke for the

first time on the twenty-sixth of February 1781. The House learned all that it ever hopes or wishes to learn from a maiden speech, — that he had a good voice, and was not afraid of the sound of it; that he was not visibly pre-occupied with the notion of making a personal display; and that he could think on his legs, and think to good purpose. He spoke a second time, after the interval of two months, on a question connected with Public Accounts; and his sound knowledge, and sober exposition, of the principles of national finance foreshadowed the Minister who was destined, in the very near future, to re-build Great Britain's credit in the money-market, and remedy the confusion to which the American war had reduced her system of taxation. His third effort placed him in the front rank of parliamentary orators. He rose more than halfway through the great debate of the twelfth of June on Fox's motion in favour of commencing negotiations with America. It was a very trying moment. "The question had been loudly called for by a particular description of members," but, when the young man offered to speak, the whole chamber became silent. He began with a clearly reasoned and quiet argument, succeeded by an outburst of fiery eloquence in a strain curiously familiar to those members of a former parliament who, years ago, had gone across the Lobby to hear Lord Chatham denounce the Boston Port Bill in the House of Peers. "A noble Lord," (he said,) "who spoke early, had called the American war a holy war. For his part he was persuaded, and would affirm, that it was a most accursed, wicked, barbarous, cruel, unnatural, unjust, and diabolical war. It was conceived in injustice; it was nurtured and brought forth in folly; and its footsteps were marked with blood, slaughter, persecution, and devastation. It was pregnant with mischiefs of every kind; mischiefs which recoiled on the unhappy people of this country. The nation was drained of its best blood, and its vital resources of men and money. The expense of it was enormous, much beyond any

former experience; and what had the British nation received in return? Nothing but a series of ineffective victories, or severe defeats; victories which were but temporary triumphs over our brethren, or defeats which filled our own homes with mourning." Pitt, in after days, never publicly retracted those deep-felt expressions of unmeasured reprobation; and there is no reason to believe that he ever re-considered, or repented them. The three statesmen in our parliamentary history of the eighteenth century whose fame is a national possession, and whom neither of the two great parties can claim exclusively for its own, — Lord Chatham, Edmund Burke, and Chatham's eminent son, — were all of them unbounded in their condemnation of Lord North's American policy.

Soon after William Pitt the younger appeared in parliament his name was put up by Charles Fox at Brooks's. Brooks's, after commencing as a club of fashion, was now being rapidly converted into a club of party politics; but fashion, within those walls, had never been divorced from wit and letters; and politics, in no sense of the word, were dry. As soon as ever the House of Commons was up, Fox, in his own way the most regular of men, travelled straight to Brooks's, where a supper, cooked and served as nowhere else in London, went on till half an hour after midnight. The cost was six shillings a head, over and above the wine-bill, which was charged in common; and it was worth any man's while to pay, and even to consume, his share for the privilege of listening to the talk. Among the frequenters of that table was Richard Brinsley Sheridan, whom Fox, by the exertion of his personal influence, had brought into parliament, and, (which was a matter of very much greater difficulty,) into Brooks's. There, too, were Richard Fitzpatrick, and French Laurence, and George Ellis. Two years afterwards the Rolliad appeared, to the delight of a laughing town, and danced through twenty editions before the public favour was exhausted. Fitzpatrick, and his two friends, were the anonymous and

now all but forgotten authors of that masterpiece of humour and fancy, sinking their individual credit in the reputation of their Club. Fox himself was the central figure in the cheery and jovial scene, — a mark and an object for the eager attentions of many sincere and devoted friends, and of some self-interested flatterers. It was no wonder that Selwyn and Gibbon, for all that they both of them pronounced Charles Fox to be the best company in the world, complained that Brooks's, on a House of Commons night, was anything but a peaceful and agreeable resort for a pledged supporter of His Majesty's Government. "The black Patriot," (wrote Gibbon to Lord Sheffield,) "is now walking and declaiming in this room with a train at his heels;" and Selwyn confided to Lord Carlisle that he was at a loss what to do with himself after a late division, since he did not care to go to Brooks's, in order to hear a *réchauffé* of the debate, "and assist at the incense offered to Charles." His pillow, (he said,) was his only resource; and undoubtedly bed was the best place for a man some years past sixty, who had drunk two bottles of wine every day of his life since he was a brilliant and graceless undergraduate at Oxford.[1]

The subject-matter, and some of the actual words, of the conversation at Brooks's are preserved by the old betting-book with nothing short of Boswellian fidelity. For some while after the general election of 1780 the Club was in low spirits, and the zest for political speculation flagged; but by the winter session of 1781 the great majority of the members already felt assured that the days of the Government were numbered. There

[1] Claret was the liquor which our ancestors used, and misused, after dinner and supper during the American war. Selwyn, three years before 1781, had succeeded to the occupation of a family residence in Cleveland Court, at the bottom of St. James's Street. "I have paid," he wrote, "for more claret drunk in this house since I came into it than I did in my last house for the twenty years which I had inhabited it, or which had been drank in this for the fifty years that it has been built. My father and grandfather drank port, and burned tallow candles except when company dined with us."

was even betting that Lord Rockingham would be Prime Minister after Easter 1782, and that the Board of Green Cloth, and the Board of Trade, would be abolished within twelve months of the time that the new Administration entered office. Enormous odds were freely offered against the remote possibility that the existing Cabinet would see the new Parliament out. "Lord Carmarthen receives five guineas from Mr. Fox, and three other members, to pay five hundred if, five years from this time, the country is at war with France, Spain, and America, and Lord North First Minister." Next after Charles Fox, the name which recurs oftenest in the pages of the book is that of General Burgoyne, whose time hung heavy on his hands, and who was always ready to predict the downfall of a set of rulers whom he had so little cause to love. A favourite form of wager, in that intensely aristocratic society, was a bet that a "Garterable" member of the one party, (to borrow an adjective of Mr. Gladstone's own invention,) would be made a Knight of the Order before a "Garterable" member of the other. "Mr. Fox betts Mr. Hanger ten guineas upon Admiral Keppel, against Lord George Germaine, for a blue ribband." "Mr. Fox betts Mr. Stanhope ten guineas upon the Duke of Dorset, against Lord George Germaine, for a blue ribband." The backers of Lord George were not long in discovering that they had put their money on the wrong horse.

The popularity which Fox now enjoyed extended far beyond the precincts of Brooks's Club. He was the son of a father who had been more hated, or at all events more painfully conscious of being hated, than any public man in the course of our parliamentary history; and believers in the theory of hereditary influences, — when tracing the origin of those qualities which, at this period in his career, made Charles Fox an all but universal favourite, — found it necessary to go several generations back on the mother's side. Edmund Burke, in one of the classical passages of British oratory, contended that the good and bad points in the character of Fox were

such as might be expected in a lineal descendant of Henry the Fourth of France. "He has faults," said Burke; "but they are faults that, though they may in a small degree tarnish the lustre, and sometimes impede the march, of his abilities, have nothing in them to extinguish the fire of great virtues. In those faults there is no mixture of deceit or of hypocrisy, of pride, of ferocity, of complexional injustice, or want of feeling for the distresses of mankind."[1]

Fox was born in 1749, whereas Henry of Navarre was married in 1600. A century and a half is a long interval of years for the unbroken transmission of family attributes; and the London society of his own day, when seeking to account for the phenomenon of Charles Fox, looked two generations further down in his genealogy. It was from the son, rather than from the father, of Queen Henrietta Maria that the young statesman was generally supposed to derive his black hair and swarthy features, as well as, (in all probability,) some of his less laudable tastes and proclivities. Nor can it be denied that Charles the Second of England, and his grandson's grandson, resembled each other in their gay and facile temper, and in their easy and expansive converse with their fellow-men. Far from bad listeners, they both of them were copious and fascinating talkers; although King Charles, (as the early and middle volumes of Pepys's Diary abundantly show,) almost invariably turned the conversation in the direction of impropriety, while Fox was content to take his topics as they came. He talked, not to show off his talents, but to place himself in human relations with his companion for the time being. In his later years, when he was one of the two foremost men in England, he lived at his earthly paradise of St. Anne's Hill on sociable and friendly terms with all his neighbours, great and small. "Every farmer," (so Samuel Rogers relates,) "stopped his horse in the lane, and

[1] *Parliamentary History;* December 1, 1783.

talked with him over the pales about the corn and the weather." And in 1781, — when he possessed the spirits, and the inexhaustible interest in life, of two-and-thirty, — he exchanged ideas with strangers, whose names he had not caught, as if he had known them intimately for years; and he bestowed a nod, and a "good afternoon," (for he loved his bed too well to be seen abroad in the morning,) upon every passer-by in the street whose face he seemed to recognise. It was impossible to resist, or resent, such overflowing good-nature, and such spontaneous familiarity. The very Ministerial journalists handled him gently and indulgently; and their humorous references to his lack of ready money, and his new-born zeal for popular rights, partook of raillery rather than of abuse. In May 1780 a Bill was introduced to render more stringent the foolish laws, which nobody obeyed, imposing a property qualification upon members of Parliament. "The Bill," said a Tory reporter, "passed with little opposition except from Mr. Charles Fox; and even this attack was unexpected, as the difference must be very immaterial to this Honourable Gentleman whether the intended qualification is a hundred, or a thousand, pounds a year." It must be admitted that, when Charles had been stopped on the road, and had turned the tables on his assailant, the Morning Post was unable to resist the temptation of hinting at a wish that Mr. Fox could be hanged instead of the highwayman.

Within his own class, and his own very comprehensive circle of acquaintances, Fox was in request with all ranks and ages, and all political parties. On the eighth of January 1782 Selwyn informed Lord Carlisle that he had not gone to bed until seven that morning, although he had neither got drunk, nor gambled. He had been supping at Brooks's with the Duke of Rutland, Charles Fox, and two others. "It was pure conversation," he wrote, "between Charles, the Duke, and I, which lasted so long. Our chief, and almost only, topic was that of Government abstractedly considered, and speculations about what would be best for this country. * * *

Charles was infinitely agreeable, or I should not have stayed so long." Two months afterwards Selwyn again wrote that "Charles did not go to Lady Hertford's ball last night, although invited *in so distinguishing a manner.* The Duke of Devonshire told him that twenty ladies had kept themselves disengaged in hopes of having him for a partner." To men and women alike there was something unusually attractive in Fox's free and joyous manner, and in the expressive play of his kind and manly, though not to any special degree handsome, countenance. He was satisfied, — and, so far as attention to the art of dress was concerned, much too easily satisfied, — with his appearance. About this time in his life he told a friend that "he never cared what was said of his person. If he was represented ugly, and was not so, those who knew him would do him justice; and he did not care for what he passed in that respect with those who did not." It was a happy frame of mind for one who was destined to be more often, and more ferociously, caricatured than any man of his own, or perhaps of any, generation.

The feeling which Fox inspired in those who knew him best, and saw most of him, was nowhere stronger than in the Parliament where he had now become the prominent figure. He did not as yet take his place on the front Opposition Bench, but continued to speak from "the third row behind, close to that pillar supporting the Gallery which is nearest to the Speaker's Chair." From this post of advantage he looked down upon, and along, the whole stretch of the House, which did not lose a syllable of his rolling sentences, or miss one of his not very graceful gestures. The leadership of his own party had accrued to him without his seeking; and he had many friends, and many potential adherents and followers, among those who at present ranked as his opponents. He said of himself long afterwards, prettily and truly enough, that he "was not a good hater;" and beneath all his fiery declamation, and merciless logic, his hearers could not fail to recognise a generous and

placable adversary. Fox was always the first to welcome the rare and auspicious occasions when the debate emerged for a while from the oppressive and tainted atmosphere of party politics. In June 1780, immediately after the Gordon Riots, Parliament was invited to consider a large accumulation of Protestant Petitions calling in violent terms for the repeal of the Roman Catholic Relief Act. The discussion which ensued was honourable to our public men; and the Prime Minister, in particular, declared himself firmly against any concession to religious bigotry. "Complimenting Lord North on the speech he had made in defence of toleration, Fox observed how the true talents, and natural disposition, of a man broke forth when relieved from the official trammels which fettered and controlled his mind."[1] And then he proceeded to describe the impression which North's speech had produced upon him by quoting the lines in the Ninth Book of Paradise Lost referring to the pleasure and relief of one

"who long in populous city pent"

issues forth on a summer morning to breathe the air of the cornfields and the pastures. Members on both sides of the House were equally surprised and delighted when, as a change from the tags of Virgil which formed their usual literary nutriment, they listened to a noble passage of English as it rose to the memory of the most eager student and lover of poetry that ever took a commanding part in the stern business of Parliament.

[1] *Life of Charles James Fox, by Lord John Russell;* chapter 13.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE FRENCH ALLIANCE. WASHINGTON AND ROCHAMBEAU. THE SOUTHWARD MARCH. YORKTOWN.

When the Alliance between France and the United States was concluded in February 1778 there were boundless expectations of success both at Versailles, and within the walls of Congress. The Ministers of King Louis justly appreciated the character of the war. They were well aware that an American campaign demanded prompt and intimate co-operation between the military and naval services, and they flattered themselves that they had secured that object by entrusting their army and their fleet to one and the same commander. It was an error of the first order. The Comte d'Estaing had served with credit as a soldier. His countrymen loved to say of him that he was "as brave as his sword," — an expression which does not appeal to English military taste; but he had nothing of the sailor about him except his title of Admiral. Throughout the whole of those twenty months of the years 1778 and 1779, during which d'Estaing's expedition to the Western Hemisphere lasted, his maritime performance was beneath criticism; and yet it must be allowed that his reverses on shore were still more shattering than his disasters at sea, and admitted of still less excuse. At sea he was opposed to an antagonist, in the person of Lord Howe, who was his match ten or twenty times over; while on land, both in the West Indies and on the continent of America, he sustained an utter and bloody defeat at the hands of every British military officer, of every rank, with whom he came into collision. The moral impression caused by that train of disgraceful blunders was more hurtful to the French and American Alliance even than the material disadvantages; for

resentment and suspicion, the all but inevitable concomitants of failure, impaired the mutual good feeling, and paralysed the common efforts, of the two associated nations during many months to come.[1]

It was an experience fraught with warning; and King Louis the Sixteenth had at his elbow a man who was shrewd enough to learn the lesson which it conveyed. The political influence of the Comte de Vergennes had been steadily growing ever since the war commenced. His brother Ministers readily conceded to him a position from which he could direct at will the armaments, as well as the diplomacy, of France. His admirers were fond of comparing him to the Earl of Chatham; and he now extracted a leaf from Chatham's book. During the Seven Years' War the Marquis of Granby, with a very large force of British troops, had been despatched to serve under Prince Ferdinand in Germany by Mr. Secretary Pitt; for Mr. Secretary Pitt, albeit he was the proudest and most patriotic of Englishmen, could not discern, in that honourable subordination of an English general, anything derogatory to the rank and precedence of England. And in like manner, — when d'Estaing had returned baffled and discomfited to Brest, and when the loudly vaunted, and expensively engineered invasion of England had gone to water, — Vergennes resorted to an expedient far better suited to the circumstances of the case. He shipped across the Atlantic between five and six thousand picked French soldiers, who were to act in conjunction with an American army under the supreme command of General Washington. The officer selected as leader of this auxiliary corps was the Comte de Rochambeau, whose military career Vergennes had watched with interest and approval, and upon whose

[1] The Comte d'Estaing, as might be expected from his antecedents, was a great man for Naval Brigades. It was a policy repugnant to the professional seamen among his officers. Sailors on shore, (these gentlemen contended,) had no military discipline, and were a source of disorder in battle, while the fleet was robbed of crews which could not be replaced at that distance from home.

discretion, and freedom from personal vanity and misplaced self-assertion, he could implicitly rely. And the Minister, who had had more than sufficient of amateur admirals, proposed to secure unity of action between the army and navy, not by the absurd device of appointing Rochambeau to the command of the fleet, but by entrusting as many vessels of war as he could gather together to a capable professional seaman who would promise to operate in loyal accord with the suggestions of General Washington. Vergennes omitted no precaution which could ensure success; and Fortune helped him as she helps those who do their utmost to render themselves independent of her favours.

Lafayette exerted a powerful influence upon the counsels of the French Government; and he contributed not a little to the smoothness, — unparalleled perhaps in the world's long record of international alliances, — with which the military partnership between France and America henceforward worked. He was in Europe during the summer of 1779, anticipating, with a confidence too exuberant to be graceful, those deeds of heroism which he intended to accomplish on English soil. But when the great Armada, unscientifically equipped, and most timidly commanded, was ruined by scurvy and dysentery, and when the army of invasion which had threatened our coasts was broken up and dispersed, Lafayette's occupation was gone. The shock restored him to his senses; and, in the hard school of disappointed ambition, he recovered his mental balance without losing his martial energy. His presence in France at that exact moment was of untold value to the American cause. He possessed a vivid and accurate acquaintance with American politics, and with the constitution of American society; he knew by close and long observation all the strong and weak points of the American soldier; and he was the emissary and interpreter of General Washington, who loved him with paternal affection, and wrote to him more frequently and unreservedly than most fathers are in the habit of writing to their sons. Lafayette,

moreover, had another powerful friend and patron besides George Washington. People of mature age, — who are great, or who have a touch of greatness in them, — are never so entirely at their ease as in the company of a very young man not unworthy of their friendship. Lafayette had soon wound himself round the heart of Vergennes; and he made use of the Minister's favour to obtain a hearing for his own opinions in official quarters. He represented to the French Cabinet, in a series of well-written Memorials, that to assist General Washington with men and money was at once the surest, and the cheapest, plan for keeping the war outside the borders of France, and for assailing Great Britain in that region of the world where the British power was most exposed to injury. When everything was arranged to his liking at Versailles the young Marquis took the good news across the ocean in person. Washington heard his story with immense satisfaction, tempered by the awe and anxiety of a profound conviction that the crisis of the Revolution had arrived, and that any lapse of caution, or lack of foresight, would be dangerous, and even fatal, to the future of America. "The die is cast," (so he told the President of Congress,) "and it remains with the States either to fulfil their engagements, preserve their credit, and support their independence, or to involve us in disgrace and defeat." From that hour forward Washington addressed himself to his task with renewed hope, and redoubled diligence and circumspection.[1]

In July 1780 the Comte de Rochambeau disembarked his army at Newport in Rhode Island, at the entrance

[1] "Il est visible que Monsieur de Vergennes avait cédé, comme Washington, à l'attrait de la Fayette. Cette sagacité, et cette justesse de vue avec tant de jeunesse, cette promptitude entraînante au point de voiler en elle ce qui était hasardeux, s'imposaient à Versailles ainsi qu'elles l'avaient fait à l'armée des Etats Unis, et au Congrès." *Doniol;* Volume IV, page 233. The correspondence between Lafayette and the French Cabinet, on pages 308 to 320 of the same volume, merits careful reading. The official replies were in the handwriting of Vergennes. The late Lord Acton used to recommend Doniol's book to his friends as an example of exhaustive historical research combined with a forcible, and most attractive, literary style.

of Narragansett Bay, — a strong position which was as much the key to New England as Charleston was the key to the Southern States, or New York the key to the Central Provinces. In the last month of the preceding year Newport had been deliberately abandoned by Sir Henry Clinton, and he now planned a scheme for recovering possession of it which was frustrated by the vigilance of Washington. As soon as that well-informed general, — who spent so much public money on his spies, and so little on himself, — learned that a fleet of transports, with British troops on board, was on its way northwards, he moved his own army to a point within supporting distance of the threatened town; he called out the whole militia of the State of Rhode Island; and he sent an urgent summons to the historic minute-men of New Hampshire and Massachusetts, who flocked to the rescue in the homely and work-a-day costumes which they had worn at Bennington and Saratoga. Most of them returned to their farms after the news got abroad that Sir Henry Clinton had renounced his projected enterprise, and had sailed back to New York; but some three or four thousand remained behind at Newport until they had displayed for the benefit of their French auxiliaries that military accomplishment in which they excelled the rank and file of any modern army. Digging with a will, they covered the ground with breastworks, and batteries, and redoubts, and avenues of communication leading from one part of the defences to another; so that the island, to the admiration of General Rochambeau's professional engineers, in a marvellously short space of time had been rendered impregnable to direct assault.

On the twenty-second of July 1781 Washington, who never sank the statesman in the soldier, placed on the Order Book a spirited manifesto addressed to the troops whom he commanded. "The General," he wrote, "with confidence assures the army that the officers and men of the French forces come to our aid animated with a zeal founded in sentiment for us, as well as in duty to

their Prince, and that they will do everything in their power to promote harmony, and cultivate friendship. He is equally persuaded that we shall vie with them in their good dispositions, to which we are excited by gratitude, as well as by a common interest, and that the only contention between these two armies will be to excel each other in good offices, and in the display of every military virtue." It was an appeal to honour and duty, made at the right moment in language becoming the occasion; and the feelings which George Washington encouraged within the sphere of his influence were heartily reciprocated in the circle of military men who surrounded Rochambeau. There was no trace among them of that insolent levity by which the coxcombs on d'Estaing's Staff had wounded the self-respect of Americans, and flattered the aristocratic prejudices of their foolish chief. A letter by a French officer, dated from the camp at Newport on the twenty-seventh of July 1781, appeared two months afterwards in the columns of the London Morning Post. "The Americans," (said this gentleman,) "gain more on my esteem as they are more known. I have met with the greatest integrity, civility, and hospitality among them. Their militia have joined us. They are not clothed in any uniform, and are in great want of shoes, and even of the most common conveniences which, if a European army was deficient in, a general desertion would follow. But the American troops are furnished with good arms, possess an incredible store of patience, and preserve the most perfect sobriety. There are no more hardy soldiers; and the last four years have given incontestable proof of their valour." Frenchmen, of all ranks from general to private, regarded themselves as on their good behaviour; and no section of the native population had any cause to complain of military license. The Loyalists of Rhode Island, whose conception of foreign soldiers had hitherto been mainly derived from the conduct and habits of their Hessian allies, were full of anxiety for the safety of their property. They sought, and obtained, an inter-

view with the French commander, who reassured them by pledging his word that they should not be molested as long as they were peaceful and quiet. The Ministerial journalists in England united in acknowledging that the Comte de Rochambeau had faithfully observed his promise. The discipline of the French regiments was exemplary. Orders against plundering were promptly issued, and strictly enforced. Everything was paid for in hard cash; and hard cash, in that country of depreciated paper, kept the provision-market of Newport abundantly supplied with all the varied products of rural industry.

Rochambeau's arrival at Rhode Island was followed by a protracted interval of inaction. The British operations in America, throughout the later part of the war, were conducted in a most unmilitary, and, (to the honour of our national method of warfare be it said,) a most un-English fashion. During four entire years, — a period half again as long as the Boer war, and more than twice as long as the time which it took Sir Colin Campbell, and Sir Hugh Rose, to extinguish the Sepoy mutiny, and to recover India, — no attempt whatever was made to defeat and break up the main army of the Americans, and to re-capture, and re-occupy, the city which was the seat of the Revolutionary government. To wage an offensive war by keeping the invaders idle and stationary in rear of a line of redoubts is a contradiction in terms; and it was the very strangest of all devices for stamping out a rebellion. It cannot be denied that Sir Henry Clinton had something to allege in his own defence. Experience had shown him it was no light task to crush General Washington. Twice, in two successive years, had Sir William Howe gone forth at the head of five-and-twenty thousand well-appointed troops; and twice, — after a prolonged, a fiercely contested, and a not inglorious campaign, — those troops had been marched back again with their purpose unaccomplished. But now, under positive orders from Lord George Germaine, the Royal forces were largely scattered over

the face of an immense area, carrying on a desultory warfare to the south of the Potomac River. A full half of the British soldiers at New York were indispensably required as a garrison for the defence of the city, of Long Island, and of the forts commanding the roadstead in the Bay; and Sir Henry Clinton could with difficulty bring into the field against Washington and Rochambeau one third of the bayonets and sabres which Sir William Howe placed in line of battle during the campaigns of 1776 and 1777.[1]

If the British advanced to a distance from their base in search, or in pursuit, of the American army, they would leave the city of New York, — containing all their magazines and arsenals, and crowded with a population of Loyalist refugees, — in imminent danger of bombardment, or assault, by sea. Our naval force on the New York station was weak in numbers, and it had been committed to the charge of an officer who enjoyed the distinction of being the very worst among Lord Sandwich's bad bargains. Admiral Arbuthnot was seventy years old, and had always been a great deal more of a sea-lawyer than a seaman. He quarrelled with Rodney about prize-money, — that question so alien to all the other traditions and associations of a noble service; he advised Sir Henry Clinton very badly on professional matters of the greatest importance; and, before he was finally deprived of his command, he woefully mismanaged a naval action against a French squadron of equal force to his own. Sir John Laughton, speaking from an unsurpassed acquaintance with the maritime history of the eighteenth century, sums up his judgment on Admiral Arbuthnot as follows: "That he was ignorant of his profession was proved by his altercation with Sir George Rodney; that he was destitute of even a rudimentary knowledge of naval tactics

[1] There exists among the Drayton House Papers a statement by Lord George Germaine, written in his own hand towards the end of 1781, in which the part of the New York army available for service in the field is estimated at an outside figure of four thousand effectives.

was shown by his absurd conduct of the action off Cape Henry; and, for the rest, he appears in contemporary stories as a coarse, blustering, foul-mouthed bully, and in history as a sample of the extremity to which the maladministration of Lord Sandwich had reduced the navy."

In December 1780 Sir George Rodney reported to Lord George Germaine a conversation which he had held with Sir Henry Clinton during his visit to New York. "I could not," (wrote Rodney,) "help declaring to him that if His Majesty's service called me again to America, if affairs were not carried on with more alacrity, and a quicker decision, it would be impossible for us to agree; for that I came to act, and not to amuse myself with the diversions of New York. I owned myself hurt at his permitting the officers of the army to act plays at a season when their arms might have been employed against the public enemy. Nothing could induce me to go to them. I gave my reason, that I was unwilling to have it reported in England that I was diverting myself with the amusements of New York instead of doing my duty in suppressing the infamous rebellion of His Majesty's deluded subjects, who, in my opinion, should be allowed no breathing time, but pushed to the last extremity. * * * I now come, my Lord, to the evacuating Rhode Island, the most fatal measure that could possibly have been taken. It gave up the best and the only harbour of consequence in America during this unhappy war; a harbour capable of holding the whole fleet of Britain, and from whence she might have detached her squadrons that in forty-eight hours might have blockaded the three chief cities of America, Boston, New York, and Philadelphia; — a harbour at all seasons of the year, which none of the others are. This pernicious advice flowed from an admiral, as Sir Henry Clinton assured me. Both were highly to blame, and have much to answer for."[1] It is interesting to

[1] *The Stopford-Sackville Manuscripts;* Volume II, pages 192, 193.

learn the views held, at the time and on the spot, by a fighting man of the first class who himself never failed to conduct the business of war with all but infallible skill, and extraordinary vigour; and yet Rodney's criticism should by rights have been directed against those rulers at home who had imposed upon their servants in America the obligation of executing what in all probability was an impossible task, with utterly insufficient means.

By far the largest of the detached and subsidiary British armies operating in America during the spring, and the summer, of 1781 was the force under Lord Cornwallis. That general had led the victors of Guildford Court House, by a circuitous march of four hundred miles through a hostile country, into the confines of Virginia; and, after reaching that province, he took over the regiments which had previously been commanded by General Phillips, and Benedict Arnold. With what he brought, and what he found, he had not less than seven thousand admirable soldiers; and, with that force at his disposal, he embarked upon a somewhat desponding and half-hearted attempt to regain possession of Virginia. It was a difficult, and, so far as Virginia itself was concerned, a thankless enterprise. The Loyalists declined to rise; and, indeed, they were so few, or so shy, as not to be easily found when Cornwallis came to look for them. Lafayette, with a scratch collection of heterogeneous troops, had been entrusted by Washington with the defence of Virginia. The skill and caution of the young Marquis, deeply conscious of the responsibilities of his first independent command, won cordial admiration from Colonel Tarleton, — the royal officer who was his most frequent and formidable antagonist during those perilous months.[1] At great risk, and with some loss of men and cannon, Lafayette

[1] *History of the Campaigns of 1780 and 1781 in the Southern Provinces of America, by Lieutenant Colonel Tarleton;* pages 299 and 300. Lafayette had two horses killed under him in the course of a single action, to the admiration of Anthony Wayne, who took part in the fighting.

did his best, not unsuccessfully, to hold the British army in play; and Sir Henry Clinton soon arrived at the conclusion that the war in Virginia was an unprofitable undertaking, and a waste of power which might be better employed elsewhere. If his own army could be reinforced by those veteran battalions which were marching up and down, to so little purpose, between the Rapidan and the James rivers, he could hope to effect something considerable against General Washington, or General Rochambeau. He accordingly desired Lord Cornwallis to transfer himself and his troops to New York; but there came into his hands, at this precise moment, a peremptory despatch from Lord George Germaine. The Secretary of State in Downing Street, — issuing his mandate across a thousand leagues of deep water, and with a still more remote conception of the actual and vital bearings of the military situation, — forbade the Commander-in-Chief in America to withdraw any troops from Virginia until that province was reduced to submission. Clinton, who had no choice except to obey, remained passive and impotent, and in sore dudgeon, behind his fortifications on the peninsula of Manhattan; while Cornwallis lay, awaiting his destiny, at Yorktown in Virginia. Two months afterwards Lord George Germaine revoked his ill-timed and fatal orders, and gave his sanction to Sir Henry Clinton's original plan. But the second message arrived too late, and the mischief done was already past repair.

Frederic the Great, acting as the champion of German independence, had by this time brought the last of his Austrian wars to a successful, and almost bloodless, issue. He thenceforward settled down, in a spirit of tranquil satisfaction, to reorganise and administer his old and new dominions, and incidentally to gather what pleasure he could out of life according to his own peculiar notions of enjoyment. He had put away his sword; but his tongue was as sharp as ever. Always willing to

amuse himself at the expense of others, he was especially formidable to those English military men who visited Potsdam in order to witness the Prussian manœuvres, and gaze on the features of the greatest warrior of the age. Disliking King George with all the force of his nature, Frederic was never so well pleased as when he was giving a piece of his mind to King George's servants. He was frankly critical of the methods by which the Anglo-Saxons in America carried on their mutual hostilities, and disagreeably inquisitive about those points of detail wherein the British,— and to a greater degree the American, — army systems differed from his own. He expressed his astonishment at the small size of their regiments, and the amazing multiplicity of their colonels; and he regarded the stagnation of the war in the Central Provinces, and in New England, as something of a personal injury to himself. After having been exhibited, so long and so often, as a gladiator fighting for his life under the eyes of the European public, he appeared to think that he was now being defrauded of his rights as a spectator, comfortably surveying the contest in the arena from the safe side of the barrier; and he professed himself unable to imagine how it came about that Sir Henry Clinton, and General Washington, spent their summers in close proximity to each other without bringing the campaign, if campaign it could be called, to the thrilling and decisive ordeal of a battle.

If Washington could have had an hour's talk with Frederic he might have explained his own proceedings to the King's satisfaction, and might have given the old strategist an instructive lecture on the only form of warfare which was outside the range of his vast experience. Frederic had never conducted a military operation of any magnitude within twenty leagues of the sea-coast; whereas, at this stage of the American conflict, by Washington's own admission, the fleet was more important than the army. King George had entirely lost his hold upon the inland parts of the continent; but it was impracticable for his adversaries to push their aggressions further,

and to capture New York and Charleston, or expel the invader from the network of Virginian rivers and estuaries, so long as the British were masters of the sea. Washington's official correspondence with France during the years 1780 and 1781, conducted through the medium of Doctor Franklin, or of certain eminent Frenchmen who were in the confidence of the Ministry at Versailles, was before everything else a closely argued, and almost continuous, appeal for naval assistance. The substance of half a hundred passages of solemn warning, and earnest entreaty, may be summed up in one vigorous sentence which emanated from his pen. "In any operation," (he wrote,) "and under all circumstances, a decisive naval superiority is to be considered as a fundamental principle, and the basis upon which every hope of success must ultimately depend." If that superiority could be acquired, and maintained even for a few weeks, something effective might be accomplished by promptitude and daring; and in the meanwhile George Washington had no resource except to possess his soul in patience, and keep his army in condition to strike a blow whenever, and wherever, the opportunity should offer.

Everything comes to those who wait, if they wait for reasons of prudence, and not from timidity, or lack of purpose; and for George Washington the hour was at length ripe for action. In the last days of March 1781 the Comte de Grasse set sail from Brest with a fleet which, if wisely used, was strong enough to turn the balance of sea power in the Western Hemisphere; and he carried with him strict injunctions from his own Government to regulate his movements in accordance with the views of the general who commanded the American army. Washington's opportunity was great; but his difficulties were enormous. No common foresight was demanded in order to arrange a combined operation of the utmost intricacy over vast distances, and vile roads, and an ocean incessantly traversed by hostile cruisers. It took him ten days to communicate with Lafayette in Virginia; two months to transmit a message to General Greene in South Caro-

lina, and get an answer back; and there was no telling when, and whence, and whither authentic and definite intelligence could be exchanged with the Comte de Grasse. On the twenty-first of May, after the news had arrived from Europe that the French fleet had put to sea, Washington and Rochambeau met at Wethersfield in Connecticut, halfway between the head-quarters of their respective armies; and there they drew up, and sent off, a despatch which de Grasse might find on his arrival at Cap Français in the island of Saint Domingo. They gave the admiral his choice of steering for Sandy Hook, in order to support the allies in an attack on New York city, or to the Chesapeake, with the object of assisting in an enterprise against the British army in Virginia. Washington intimated a preference for the latter course; and Rochambeau was still more emphatic in the same direction. He had conceived a deep affection for Lafayette, and was cruelly anxious about the young man's fate in case he should ever come into serious collision with the veteran troops of Lord Cornwallis.[1]

Washington understood the entire meaning of the situation, and clearly discerned that it was a case of now or never. He knew that both the antagonists in the long contest were weakened and wearied, and that victory was for the one who should brace himself up to strike first, and strike hardest. He had by this time achieved an exalted position from which, with reasonable hope of success, he might venture to make a call upon the flagging energies, and the exhausted resources, of his countrymen; for he was, beyond all question, the leading personage in the nation. After the shameful collapse of the Conway Cabal, and the abject failure, in presence of the enemy, of Charles Lee and Horatio Gates, the well-established, but

[1] "Permettez, mon cher marquis, à un vieux père de vous répondre comme à un fils tendre qu'il aime et estime infiniment. * * * C'est toujours le vieux père Rochambeau qui parle à son cher fils Lafayette qu'il aime, aimera, et estimera jusqu'au dernier soupir."

So begins, and so ends, a letter addressed by Rochambeau to Lafayette in August 1780; and such was the mental attitude of the older man towards the younger.

not self-sought, predominance of George Washington had no rivals, and few detractors and opponents. Congress had learned to treat him with deference ; to enact the laws, and promulgate the regulations, which he suggested in the interests of efficient military administration ; and to vote him the men and money for which he asked. But the money was discredited paper ; and the men were not readily forthcoming at the invitation of Congress. The reputation and efficacy of that historical body had long been on the wane ; and, as the war progressed, executive power was passing from the national assembly to the State Governments. The change was not acceptable to Washington ; for he belonged to the school of American statesmen who were keenly, and even vehemently, opposed to the principle of decentralisation. But, as is the habit of a great man at a supreme crisis, he kept his personal theories and preferences in the background, and was content to take the world as it stood, and to do his work with such tools and appliances as presented themselves to his grasp. He was on excellent terms with the local Governors, he possessed the confidence of the local assemblies, and he enjoyed almost unbounded popularity among the constituents who elected them. The influence which George Washington exercised over the State Governments of America, during those years of national effort and peril, had much in common with the influence which William the Silent, more than two centuries previously, exercised under the stress of very similar circumstances over the States of Holland.

Washington records in his journal that, before leaving Connecticut, he took the opportunity of setting himself in communication with a famous worthy of the Revolution who united a deep and abiding sense of religion to rare practical ability, and an instinctive perception of all that appertains to war. "I had," (he wrote,) "a great deal of private conversation with Governor Trumbull, who gave it as his opinion that, if any offensive operation should be undertaken, he had little doubt of our obtaining Men and Provisions adequate to our

wants." Some three days afterwards Washington prepared and forwarded despatches to the four New England States, calling upon them, in earnest and pointed terms, to raise their Continental Battalions to their full strength of rank and file. His appeal met with an immediate, and a not insufficient, response, — all the more grateful to him because there was a special service, indispensable to the accomplishment of his plans, for which he destined the New England troops. Before long the allied generals adopted the very judicious step of concentrating their forces in front of New York city, to await the answer from Admiral de Grasse, and enable the two armies to improve their mutual acquaintance before engaging in combined action. The Americans took up their position some twelve miles north of the British lines, with their head-quarters at Philipsburg, on ground where their right flank was covered by the Hudson River; while the French were posted on the left, with a valley between the two camps. Here they passed the whole of July, and the first half of August, like sworn brothers in arms,— growing accustomed to each other's ways; learning something, although not very much, of each other's language; and noting the differences between the outward appearance of their respective fronts of battle with amused, but far from disrespectful, curiosity. Washington's military soul was delighted by the brilliant equipment, and exact manœuvres, of Rochambeau's infantry; and French regimental opinion pronounced the Americans "to be in as good order as possible for an army composed of men without uniforms, and with narrow resources." [1]

The character of the personal relations between Frenchmen and Americans was of immense importance to the future of the war; but there was no subject on which the British Ministers had been left more entirely in the dark by their correspondents at New York.

[1] Many of the Americans were just then more comfortably dressed than usual; for Mrs. Sarah Bache of Philadelphia, — a daughter of Benjamin Franklin, and herself already something of a mother in Israel, — had recently made two thousand of them a present of a shirt apiece.

Admiral Arbuthnot, who was a great letter-writer, repeatedly assured Lord George Germaine that "the return of all the revolted provinces to their allegiance would be accelerated, above all things, by their detestation of the French alliance," and that the situation of the allied armies was hopeless because unanimity did not exist between their generals in the field. That aspect of the case was willingly accepted by the statesman to whom Admiral Arbuthnot's letters were addressed. As late as the close of the year 1781 the American Secretary of State drew up a confidential paper for the information of his colleagues in the British Cabinet. The power of General Washington, (he wrote,) was becoming so great that the dislike of the American people for being ruled by a military man, "joined to their aversion of the French nation," would incline them to return to their connection with Great Britain. That was the last contribution made by Lord George Germaine to the stock of wisdom by which our country was then governed.

Whatever might be the illusions which prevailed in Downing Street, the actual truth lay in quite another direction. Rochambeau had received binding and imperative orders from the Ministry at Versailles, and he carried out his instructions with hearty good-will, and unimpeachable loyalty. On the last day of May 1781 he had placed his regiments, without any conditions and stipulations, at the absolute disposal of Washington. "You may do with me," he said, "whatever you will;" and, when using that form of words, he spoke for his followers as well as for himself. French officers, whatever their military rank, or even their social position, — and in King Louis's army social position was the more important of the two, — were proud of being led by a chieftain whose reputation was already classical, and whom they recognised as all the more of an aristocrat because he did not bear a title. "*This is the seventh year,*" wrote the Marquis de Chastellux, "*that General Washington has commanded, and that he has obeyed Congress.* More need not be said, especially in America,

where all men know how to appreciate the merit contained in this simple fact. People will repeat to the end of time that Condé was intrepid, and Turenne prudent, and Prince Eugene adroit. It is not thus that Washington will be characterised. Of him it will be told that, at the termination of a long civil war, he had nothing with which he could reproach himself." Washington's influence over the romantic and impressionable imagination of his French allies owed not a little to the dignity and charm of his bodily presence; that outward gift, (to employ Gibbon's phrase,) which is seldom despised except by those to whom it is refused. His lofty stature and well-knit frame, — his simple, manly carriage, and cheerful and winning countenance, — were remarked upon by all his foreign visitors, lay or clerical, noble or simple, with a copiousness of language, and a unanimity, that defy quotation. As he rode down the line of French infantry, bravely mounted, and sitting his horse like one who was accustomed to follow the chase over rougher ground than the glades and avenues of a royal deer-park in the neighbourhood of a European capital, he attracted all eyes, and united all suffrages. "This great man," said a French officer of high birth, "great everywhere, is a thousand times more splendid and admirable at the head of his army."

Rochambeau, and his companions, had sailed from France in the sanguine expectation of being pleased with America. Not a few eager young fellows, who had read their Rousseau, and who hoped to find traces of the golden age, if it still lingered anywhere, on the banks of the Potomac and the Susquehanna rivers, had made interest for a place on the Staff, or had exchanged into regiments which stood at the top of the list for service abroad. Their ardour was not at all to the taste of at least one among their comrades, — the Chevalier de Pontgibaud, who had gone through most of the War of Independence as an aide-de-camp to Lafayette. After the fall of the Bastille this gentleman, who apparently had had quite enough of democracy in America, retired across the

frontier with the First Emigration, and subsequently marched against his native country in the train of the Duke of Brunswick. The Chevalier, in his published Memoirs, comments with severity upon some of his brother officers who served with him during his last American campaign. "When we think," he wrote, "of the false ideas of government and philanthropy which these youths acquired in America, and propagated in France with so much enthusiasm, and such deplorable success, — for this mania of imitation powerfully aided the Revolution, though it was not the sole cause of it, — we are bound to confess that it would have been better, both for themselves and us, if these young philosophers in red-heeled shoes had stayed at home in attendance on the Court."

The cleverer and more intelligent of the French officers displayed an insatiable appetite for information about American manners and American institutions. They had a sincere respect for the heroes of Trenton and Saratoga, and were never tired of getting them to recount the story of their marches and their battles. The veterans of the Continental Line, on their side, would gladly have made their French allies welcome in their quarters; but the means of entertainment were wanting. "A military man," wrote Washington, "has the same turn for sociability as a person in civil life. He conceives himself equally called upon to live up to his rank, and his pride is hurt when circumstances restrain him. Conceive then the mortification they must suffer, even the general officers, when they cannot invite a French officer, a visiting friend, or a travelling acquaintance, to a better repast than bad whiskey, (and not always that,) and a bit of beef without vegetables!" Washington exerted himself to supplement the deficiencies of camp hospitality by setting before his foreign guests a bill of fare which at all events contained some characteristic specimens of national dishes. But when he was on the march, or alone with his military family, the food was often far from plentiful, and sometimes very short of

tasty. Washington, at the end of the war, when settling his household accounts with the Treasury, charged the public eight hundred pounds to cover the period between November 1780 and September 1781, "which included the whole of that space of time when the French and American army formed one camp at Phillipsburgh." He described it, in his stately words, as an arrangement "which seems most equitable to do justice to the public, and no injustice to myself."

On the ninth of May 1781 Washington rode out to West Point, and there learned from General Heath that all the meal deposited in the advanced redoubts for contingent purposes was not sufficient to keep the army two days. To the imagination of a patriotic American there is something little short of appalling in the straits to which, at this turning point of the war, the American Commander-in-Chief was reduced. But the politicians at Philadelphia, acting on the advice of Alexander Hamilton, had at last done something effectual to devise a remedy. Congress, making a first start in the direction of establishing the principle and practice of Ministerial responsibility, had superseded the old Treasury Board, and had elected Robert Morris, by a unanimous vote, Superintendent of the Finances. It might seem superfluous to nominate a Superintendent of Finances at a time when those finances consisted in paper dollars which nobody would take; but Congress knew very well what it was doing when it placed a man of vast and varied experience, and of unlimited audacity and resourcefulness, in contact with all the Supply Services of the State. On the twenty-ninth of May 1781 Robert Morris wrote to Washington as follows: "Not being prepared, in my official character, with funds or means of accomplishing the supply which you need, I have written to General Schuyler, and to Mr. Thomas Lowrey in New Jersey, requesting their immediate exertion to procure from their own credit one thousand barrels of flour each, and send the same forward in parcels as fast as procured to camp, deliverable to your Excellency's orders;

and I have pledged myself to pay them in hard money for the costs and charges within a month, six weeks, or two months. I shall make it a point to procure the money, being determined never to make an engagement that cannot be fulfilled; for, if by any means I should fail in this respect, I will quit my office as useless from that moment." That was the spirit in which Robert Morris confronted his new duties; and those were the methods by which he tided the fortune of Washington and America over the four months of stress and penury which preceded the great event.

On the fourteenth of August 1781 the reply from Saint Domingo came. The same frigate which took the letter of the allied generals to Admiral de Grasse carried back from him an assurance that he was on the point of weighing anchor, and making straight for Chesapeake Bay. The receipt of the message left no place for hesitation in the mind of Washington. From that moment forward everything was in motion around him, and not a day, nor an hour, was lost; for he had thought out all his arrangements with reference to a long-expected, and ardently desired, contingency. His task was nothing less than to withdraw his army from contact with a powerful, and presumably vigilant, enemy, and to transport it four hundred miles by land and water to a new base of operations in order to come to grips with a new adversary. The expedition to Yorktown has been compared, not inaptly, with Napoleon's march from Boulogne to Ulm in the year 1805. The two operations indeed, if the regiments and guns are counted, were on a widely different scale of magnitude: but they resembled each other in originality of conception, and perfection of execution. The event was the same in both cases; and the most partial admirer of the French Emperor cannot but allow that the exploit of the American commander has left a more enduring and indelible impression on history.

Washington's first care was to notify Admiral de

Grasse of the course agreed upon by himself and General Rochambeau. They had determined, (he wrote,) to remove towards the Chesapeake the whole of the French army, and as large a detachment of the American army as could be spared. That detachment, however, was anything but large; for the American Commander-in-Chief considered himself bound to leave behind him a force strong enough to hold in respect the British garrison of New York city during his own absence in Virginia. With that object in view he stationed old General Heath at West Point, as a central place of arms around which to operate, and an impregnable fortress while in the hands of a trustworthy Governor. Washington made over to Heath a compact and homogeneous body of four thousand New England regulars and militia, and retained under his own standard barely half as many rank and file, veterans all of the Continental Line; grumblers, and even mutineers on occasion; bitter against the Congress, which they accused of having starved and robbed them, but passionately devoted to their general, and as sturdy marchers, and capable fighters, as any soldiers in the world. Washington brought along with him, or had already sent forward in advance, a great abundance of zealous and experienced officers from every branch of the service. French and Americans together, the allies numbered six thousand men. It was not so much an army as the nucleus of an army; for Washington and Rochambeau relied for their ultimate superiority in the field upon the troops whom they would find in Virginia, or pick up from the States through whose confines their projected journey ran.

On Monday the twentieth of August the allies began to cross the Hudson at King's Ferry, some twelve miles down stream from West Point, with all their stores and baggage; and boats were so scarce and small that Saturday arrived before their rear-guard had passed the river. Sir Henry Clinton did not molest or hamper them during that critical operation, nor did he follow

them up in pursuit when they commenced their southward march. An explanation of the British general's inactivity is not far to seek. The secret service department of the American army was under the personal and individual control of Washington, who was equally skilled in the art of obtaining information for himself, and the art of misinforming and misleading his adversary. Sir Henry Clinton was induced to believe that the allies had shifted their quarters beyond the Hudson River, and were marching southward, with the intention of occupying Staten Island, and using it as a point from which to command the harbour, and threaten the town, of New York. Sir Henry had been confirmed in that notion by certain passages in letters which had been expressly written in order to be intercepted, and by the ostentatious industry with which the French and American engineers set about constructing a bakery in New Jersey, very near to Sandy Hook, and on a scale apparently designed to meet the requirements of a large besieging army. With this suspicion in his mind Sir Henry deemed it more prudent to await events, and to sit tighter behind his defences than ever.[1]

Washington knew that the surest way of having a secret kept is to keep it to yourself. Heath, as a deeply interesting entry in his private journal records, was taken into the confidence of his superior officer;[2] but no man of all the thousands who marched with Washington and Rochambeau during that last week of August 1781 knew for certain whither he was bound. Even Generals of Brigade and Division supposed that

[1] In October 1780 Washington had laid out from two to three hundred pounds with the object of "opening and carrying on a correspondence with persons within the Enemy's Lines" by the way of Staten Island, and had allotted fifty-six pounds towards the expenses of communicating by the way of Long Island. In the critical month of August Washington disbursed on Secret Services over a hundred and fifty pounds, which likely enough was the bottom gold in his military chest.

[2] "August 19. About noon His Excellency General Washington left the army, setting his face towards his native State, in full confidence, (to use his own words,) 'with a common blessing,' of capturing Lord Cornwallis and his army." *General Heath's Memoirs.*

their destination was Staten Island, and remained under that impression until they had left New Brunswick behind them. The rank and file of the Continental army were voluble strategists, and guessing and calculating went on briskly from front to rear of the column of march; but they only learned the truth on their arrival at Philadelphia, where the real purport of the expedition had already been revealed to Congress on official authority. The whole city was in a transport of hope, exultation, and patriotic fervour; and the army traversed the streets amidst a tempest of cheering, and a rain of flowers from the open windows. The white and blue uniforms of the regiment of Bourbonnais and the regiment of Deux Ponts, and the rose-coloured facings of the regiment of Soissonnais, brought home to the spectators visible and flattering evidence that the richest monarch of Continental Europe had cast in his fortunes with theirs;[1] and they were still more profoundly stirred when the ragged battalions of their own countrymen went past with swinging strides, and weather-beaten, resolute visages. Every one was on the look-out for a glimpse of Washington. "In the evening," (we are told,) "the city was illuminated, and His Excellency walked through some of the principal streets, attended by a numerous concourse of people, eagerly pressing to see their beloved General."[2] But Washington had no relish for an ovation which he had not yet earned; and, after compressing a stupendous amount of public business into the compass of a hundred hours, he rode away towards the Head of Elk in Maryland. He was greeted by the tidings that Admiral de Grasse, with eight-and-twenty ships of the line in fighting trim, was already lying within the Capes of Chesapeake Bay.[3]

[1] Those rose-coloured facings had already been found irresistible. Rochambeau wrote from White Plains in July that he had marched his whole force southward from Rhode Island "except ten of the Soissonnais who had gone back to their sweethearts at Newport."

[2] *Pennsylvania Packet* of September 1, 1781.

[3] *Washington's Journal;* Wednesday, September 5, 1781. The course of the campaign may be traced in the map at the end of this volume.

De Grasse had displayed a loyalty towards his American ally in excess even of the instructions which he had received from Versailles. The Ministers of King Louis had ordered him to detach some of his men-of-war as an escort for their West Indian merchant-fleet on its voyage to Europe; but he paid no attention to the command, and brought across to Virginia every ship of the line which was in a condition to keep the sea. He carried with him a reinforcement of three thousand French infantry whom he had borrowed from the Governor of Cap Français, and some coined money which he had raised in Havannah to supply the immediate necessities of Washington's soldiers. Only five days after de Grasse reached the Chesapeake a squadron of nineteen British ships appeared off the mouth of the Bay. They were under the charge of Admiral Thomas Graves, who thirteen years afterwards, on Lord Howe's Glorious First of June, played a most gallant part as the subordinate of a greater man than himself, but who was devoid of some among the qualities indispensable to an officer in chief command. A combat ensued in which Graves handled his vessels badly, and sustained more damage than he inflicted upon the enemy; and during the next week there arrived from Rhode Island eight other French battle-ships, convoying nearly a score of transports with an abundant and varied assortment of military stores, and the whole of General Rochambeau's train of siege artillery, on board. De Grasse thenceforward had at his disposition a fleet as strong in numbers as the French and Spanish armada at Trafalgar. Admiral Graves threw up the game in despair, and sailed back to New York; and with him departed the last hope of salvation for the British interest in Virginia.

Meanwhile the allied forces were moving steadily and rapidly towards their goal, under difficulties that have often before vexed the heart of military leaders, although they make comparatively little show in military histories. Robert Morris, by a miracle of energy

and persuasiveness, which it would not have been possible for him ever to repeat, had contrived that the men should find beef and bread at every stage in their march, and a respectable flotilla of boats for their conveyance down the Bay when they arrived at the Head of Elk. Provisions, and shipping, could be obtained in kind, and on credit; but ready cash was a commodity less easy to procure. Some months previously the French Government had granted a donation of six million francs for the use of the American army. The first instalment of this munificent gift had as yet got no further than Boston; and Washington's war-chest was empty. On the twenty-seventh of August, from one of his halting-places in New Jersey, he sent on to Robert Morris a letter which dates with precision the low-water mark of Revolutionary finance. "I must entreat you," (he wrote,) "if possible to procure one month's pay in specie for the detachment which I have under my command. Part of those troops have not been paid anything for a long time past, and have on several occasions shown marks of great discontent." Discontent was only too certain to assume a violent form if, on his arrival at Philadelphia, the soldier, in satisfaction of his demands, was presented with a handful of Continental paper which would purchase for him from the Philadelphian shop-keepers nothing except black looks or sarcastic words. The Finance Minister of the United States was only too well aware that Congress, with the best of will, could not help him to find the money. So he went, hat in hand, up and down the city, borrowing, on his own responsibility, from "his mercantile and other friends," until he had scraped together a collection of ten thousand dollars. Twenty thousand more were lent him by General Rochambeau, on a personal engagement that they should be repaid before the month of September closed. The danger was averted, and the situation saved; and the allied troops, — abundantly, if not very daintily, fed, and in buoyant

spirits, — tramped along the highway as far as the Head of Elk, at the northern extremity of the great Chesapeake gulf. Thence they proceeded, mostly on ship-board, to Williamsburg the capital of Virginia, which stood within a long day's march of Yorktown where Cornwallis and his army lay.[1]

Virginia, from very early days, had enacted a conspicuous part in the drama of the Revolution. Her social constitution, as was the case likewise with the province of New York, was based upon a feudal landed aristocracy; but there the resemblance ended, for the great Virginian planters, unlike the territorial potentates of New York, were keen and convinced Whigs, who led their fellow-citizens in peace and war alike. Such were George Washington; and Colonel William Washington, the fiery dragoon; and Light Horse Harry Lee, the captor of Paulus Hook; and Colonel William Campbell who won the day at King's Mountain, and was shot dead in front of his men at Eutaw Springs. Wherever sabres and bayonets were clashing, Virginians set an example of valour, and of a chivalry that was peculiarly, and proverbially, their own; but, while they acquired renown abroad, they were unable to keep the enemy outside their own borders. New Jersey, and Connecticut, and the up-country region of New York State, under their famous administrators, became, as the war proceeded, so many strongholds impervious to the incursions of an invader; but Virginia, which had done more for the cause than any of her sister States except Massachusetts, was frequently over-run by an

[1] Some of Rochambeau's regiments marched by road to Annapolis, where they met a French squadron which conveyed them to the James river in thirty-six hours. The troops who embarked on country-boats at the Head of Elk came in for a much more protracted voyage. But they had biscuit and rum, and very tough beef, both fresh and salt; and a pound of cheese was served out to every man before he went on board.

enemy, and constantly exposed to insult. Her worst times began when, in June 1780, Thomas Jefferson became the executive ruler of the State. Jefferson could speak and write like few, but he made a poor show in the character of a War Governor. Benedict Arnold, — unpunished, and almost unresisted, — plundered and burned far and wide throughout the province; and, when Benedict Arnold had been withdrawn for service elsewhere, Lord Cornwallis marched inland with his main army, and pushed his advanced parties into the heart of Virginia. Several times in the six months between December 1780 and June 1781 the State Legislature fled ignominiously from the official capital, and took sanctuary in a distant village. Colonel Tarleton, darting forward with a small detachment of cavalry, came within a very few hours of capturing Governor Jefferson in the same manner as Colonel Harcourt, four or five years previously, had captured General Charles Lee; and the prize, in both cases, would have been about of equal value. Jefferson now began to count the hours which would elapse before his release from office. "From a belief," (so he long afterwards wrote,) "that, under the pressure of the invasion under which we were then labouring, the public would have more confidence in a military chief, — and that, the military commander being invested with the civil power also, both might be wielded with more energy, promptitude, and effect for the defence of the State, — I resigned the administration at the end of my second year."

The very man whom the crisis needed was at once forthcoming. General Thomas Nelson, a Virginian of good family, and an old Etonian, was a soldier of experience, and a civilian of distinction. He had been a warm promoter, and ultimately a Signer, of the Declaration of Independence; and he sustained the national cause gallantly and disinterestedly both with sword and purse. Earlier in the war some Virginian battalions had flatly refused to march to the help of the Carolinas until they received their arrears of pay.

Public credit was at such a low ebb that the State Government was unable to raise a single cent, but Thomas Nelson had met the difficulty by issuing bonds to the moneylenders in his own name. After the war was over he sold property to the value of two hundred thousand dollars in order to discharge his obligations; and he died a poor man. In June 1781 Jefferson indicated Nelson as his successor, and he was chosen Governor of the State by acclamation. He was just forty years old, the right military age; his countrymen knew him for a brave and skilful officer; and, when he summoned the provincial militia into the field, they responded to his call. A very formidable body of auxiliaries they were, — flocking to the scene of action at their own charges; carrying, many of them, their own rifles, which they knew well how to use; and turning out in all the greater number whenever there was a fair prospect that their own side would gain the day.[1] No one was better acquainted with their value than Lord Cornwallis. "I will not," (so he wrote to Clinton,) "say much in praise of the militia of the Southern Colonies; but the list of British officers and soldiers, killed and wounded by them since last June, proves but too fatally that they are not contemptible."[2] The Hon. John Fortescue, reviewing the war as a whole, remarks that, whatever might be the faults and weaknesses of the militia, it was only when they came forward in large masses that an American army, if unaided by a foreign ally, ever achieved any important success.[3]

Washington did not think it necessary to accompany

[1] General Washington to Major General Lincoln; April 4, 1781.

[2] Earl Cornwallis to Sir Henry Clinton, Williamsburg, June 30, 1781.

[3] *Fortescue's History of the British Army;* Volume III, chapter 20. "Our columns," (wrote the Earl of Stair in the year 1782,) "were attended everywhere by a trained and exasperated militia, inured to war, and as numerous as they pleased to have them; — all ready, all apprized, all in arms, and little, if at all, inferior in such a country, (though their hair may not be so well powdered,) to regular troops." The British Ministers, (said his Lordship,) were too apt to draw their notions of a battle in the American forest from a parade in Saint James's Park.

his troops in person as they plodded along the shores, or tacked to and fro across the reaches, of Chesapeake Bay. Making a wide circuit to the westward, and riding a hundred and twenty miles within the thirty-six hours, he reached Mount Vernon on the evening of Sunday the ninth of September, and looked forth once more from his own verandah upon that view which, (in the words of Emerson,) "combines grandeur with placidity, as he did himself." He tasted three days of home-life after an unbroken absence of exactly twice as many years; and on the fourteenth of September he reached Williamsburg, and took over the command of Lafayette's army. He was surrounded by many of his most renowned lieutenants, — Baron von Steuben, and Anthony Wayne, and General James Clinton, and General Lincoln, and Henry Knox, — the best artillery officer, now that General Phillips was no longer alive, who gave the word of command in the English language. That was an important consideration in a campaign which was to be decided mainly by artillery. There too was Alexander Hamilton. Talleyrand is reported to have observed in casual conversation that he had known many of the most remarkable men of his time, but that he had never, on the whole, known one equal to Hamilton. So Talleyrand said long afterwards; but in September 1781 Hamilton, a youth of four-and-twenty, was as yet distinguished only as a soldier. He had exacted from Washington, who could deny him nothing, a pledge that, if a Forlorn Hope was wanted for any desperate service, he, and none other, should be the leader of it; and, when the order was given to assault the redoubts at Yorktown, the Commander-in-Chief did not forget his promise.

As soon as Washington had settled himself down at Williamsburg reinforcements began to pour in from many quarters. The three thousand French infantry, whom Admiral De Grasse brought from Saint Domingo, were beginning to recover from the effects of their sea voyage; successive detachments of the main army, which

had come south from King's Ferry, reported themselves at head-quarters as they arrived by land or water, fit and fresh for action; and Governor Nelson's militia trooped gaily into camp, eager to fight what seemed likely to be a winning battle under the eye of the greatest of all Virginians. By the end of September Washington could put into line sixteen thousand troops, — more than twice as many as the soldiers of Cornwallis; and rumour, which seldom does things by halves, gave out his strength as greater than it actually was. Cornwallis himself was under the impression that the allied army numbered twenty thousand men. As a matter of fact, Washington's force consisted of seven thousand Frenchmen, five thousand five hundred Continental infantry, and thirty-five hundred Virginian militia. They were full as many as he wanted, and more than he found it easy to feed. Cornwallis, with good reason, was alarmed and disheartened. He, at all events, had no illusions about the Royalist sentiments of the American people, or the feebleness and incapacity of the American administration. "By the vigorous exertions," (he said,) "of the present governors of America large bodies of men are soon collected; and I have often observed that, when a storm threatens, our friends disappear." So Cornwallis had written in May 1781; and in September, surprised and hopelessly outnumbered, he abandoned all idea of opposing Washington in the open field, and elected to remain on the defensive behind his intrenchments until he could be succoured by a British fleet and army.

Towards the end of June 1781 Sir Henry Clinton had directed Cornwallis to fortify a position within the Capes of the Chesapeake as a naval and military base for invading the Southern Colonies. The locality selected was Yorktown, a village of fifty or sixty houses built on a sandy bluff overhanging the York river, at a point where the stream narrowed itself to a single mile between shore and shore. The work on the parapets and ditches progressed but slowly. Spades and pick-

axes were rare articles; negro labourers failed to present themselves in the required number; and the health of the British soldier was gravely affected by exposure to an August sun. Lord Cornwallis disliked the place from the first. He called it "a defensive post which cannot have the smallest influence on the war in Carolina, and which only gives us some acres of unhealthy swamp, and is for ever liable to become a prey to a foreign enemy with a temporary superiority at sea."[1] Yorktown, however, was the sole refuge at his disposal, and he was obliged to make the best of it. His battalions were told off to their station on the ramparts, and his river-front was protected by the presence of the Charon, a British man-of-war mounting forty-four guns. There were provisions enough, if carefully husbanded, to last for six weeks, but no longer; and the store of cannon-balls, and more especially of shells, was altogether insufficient for a protracted siege. The space surrounded by the earthworks, — within which seven or eight thousand men were doomed to stew, and sicken, and suffer through the hot months of a Virginian summer, — did not exceed twelve hundred yards long by five hundred broad. On the seventeenth of September Cornwallis reported to Sir Henry Clinton that Yorktown was not defensible. "If," (he said,) "you cannot relieve me very soon you must be prepared to hear the worst."

Events moved as Washington had planned, and as Cornwallis feared. The allies invested Yorktown, and commenced the siege in earnest. Colonel Tarleton, who was inside the wall, was astonished by the vigour and rapidity of their operations. The rivalry, (he writes,) which existed between the officers of the French and American armies communicated their zeal to the soldiery. The besiegers completed their first parallel within six hundred paces of the British position, and on the ninth of October their batteries opened with a crushing superiority over the fire of the defence. General Washing-

[1] Lord Cornwallis to Sir Henry Clinton; July 8, 1781.

ton informed the President of Congress that the garrison withdrew their cannon from the embrasures, and scarcely discharged a shot during the whole day. Before it became dark the Charon, and two other British ships, were set on fire with red-hot balls, and burned to the water's edge. Towards sunset on the fourteenth of October the allies stormed two outlying works which covered the British lines. The Americans carried their redoubt by a rush; but the French met with a stubborn resistance, and purchased their conquest at a substantial price; for the six score musketeers who defended the fort killed or wounded almost man for man of their own number.[1]

The French and the Americans were now within three hundred yards of the rampart; and, at that fatally short range, they commenced a bombardment from sixty powerful breaching-guns and large mortars. Every corner of the square half-mile of space, into which the garrison had been crowded, was ravaged by a continuous storm of iron. Our soldiers fell fast; and the wounds inflicted, from the nature of the missiles, were of frightful severity. Of forty-five Royal Artillery men who were struck down at their guns no fewer than twenty-four were killed outright. Lord Cornwallis reported that his earthworks were crumbling away, and that the fire was too hot for him to show a gun. He could reply with nothing better than an eight-inch mortar, and he had only a hundred shells left remaining with which to load it. Meanwhile the general health of the beleaguered army was worse than bad, and already there were two thousand invalids in hospital. At daybreak on the sixteenth of October three or four hundred British infantry made a spirited sally, put the guard of

[1] The French acknowledged a loss of forty-six killed, and sixty-two wounded. Six officers went down, including Comte Charles de Lameth, (afterwards the orator of the Constituent Assembly,) who was shot through both knees. Not a few celebrities, and victims, of the Revolution had served in the American war. De Custine, who was second in command in the trenches throughout the siege of Yorktown, was destined to die by the guillotine, as the Comte d'Estaing died after him.

General Rochambeau's trenches to the rout, and gained temporary possession of eleven cannon. But our soldiers, who had not been provided with spiking-irons, were unable to render the captured artillery unserviceable. They had only time, (wrote Washington,) to thrust their bayonets into the touch holes, and break them off; and the points were easily extracted.[1] On the following night Lord Cornwallis endeavoured to retreat across the river. The attempt failed of success. Cut off from escape, and deprived of all means of effectual resistance, our people were in desperate case.

There was terrible anxiety at New York. The feeling of every true soldier in the city is expressed in a letter from Colonel George Damer to Lord George Germaine. "The determination," (so this officer wrote,) "of putting us on board the men-of-war has revived our spirits; and to that degree is my Lord Cornwallis a favourite, not only with his own, but with this army, that no risk, danger, or consequences are thought of provided he can be relieved, or his fall procrastinated, or shared." Sir Henry Clinton sailed to the rescue with twenty-five ships of the line, and ten frigates, carrying all the best regiments of his New York army on board. The expedition duly reached the Capes of the Chesapeake without encountering an enemy at sea; but the cannon had already fallen silent on the south bank of the York river. Cornwallis surrendered on the nineteenth of October, and seven thousand British and German soldiers became prisoners of war.

[1] Washington to the President of Congress, 16 October, 1781. The same story is told by Colonel Tarleton, as well as in a contemporary letter to Governor Trumbull from his son, who was then at the head-quarters of the allied army.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE BEGINNING OF THE END. THE TWENTY-SEVENTH OF MARCH.

THROUGHOUT the summer and autumn of 1781 America hung above the Western horizon like a red ball of fire; and the war, which there was in progress, seemed to the imagination of Englishmen as mysterious and unintelligible as if it were taking place on the surface of the planet Mars. There prevailed an instinctive impression that our military operations on that continent were guided by no fixed and rational plan of action, and were inspired by no well-founded expectation of victory. That view was ably and consistently maintained in the pages of the Whitehall Evening Post, a most respectable newspaper which made it a duty to warn and advise, rather than to attack, the Government. Our force in the field, (it was there said,) was broken up into no fewer than four very small armies, manœuvring so far apart as to be unable to afford each other the least assistance, and all of them at a great distance from New York, which itself was narrowly watched by the main American army, as well as by a French army, posted in the immediate vicinity of the city.

Halfway through October it became known in England that Admiral Graves had been worsted in a sea-fight at the mouth of the Chesapeake, and had retired to New York, leaving a powerful French fleet in undisputed possession of the Virginia waters. From that moment forward the public apprehension, hitherto vague and undefined, concentrated itself upon the peril which threatened Lord Cornwallis. "We have continually," (wrote the Whitehall Post,) "expressed great anxiety for the fate of that brave and noble Lord, and his little

army of heroes. These fears have grown on us into downright dread and terror as the season advanced, and the scenes of action developed themselves under that dark and gloomy veil which Ministers endeavour to throw over all our national affairs." Horace Walpole sent word to Sir Horace Mann at Florence, through a safe channel, that we were at the last gasp in America, and that he was prepared to learn the worst news about Lord Cornwallis. "I would not," he wrote, "say so much as this but by your own courier; for I have too much *fierté* to allow to enemies even what they know." Selwyn suggested to Lord Carlisle that it would be an instructive exercise for his son and heir, little George Howard, to compare the plight of Lord Cornwallis to the plight of the unhappy Nicias after the defeat of the Athenian fleet in the Great Harbour of Syracuse. The poor boy was still young for a course of Thucydides, even when studied through the medium of Rollin; but it must be acknowledged that, in the essential features of the two stories, it would be impossible to light upon a more complete and ominous parallel. The case was put by Gibbon in the pithy language of an historian who had depicted scores of critical situations, in many lands and many centuries, but never one more fraught with menace. "We all," (he wrote to Lord Sheffield,) "tremble on the edge of a precipice; and, whatever may be the event, the American war seems now to be reduced to very narrow compass both of time and space."

On the twenty-fifth of November 1781 a packet-boat, which had carried a passenger of state from Dover to Calais, brought back a French Gazette with a full account of the capitulation of Yorktown. Among the profound and complex feelings which the news excited one sentiment was prominent, spontaneous, and universal throughout the nation. Nobody blamed Lord Cornwallis, and everybody was sorry for him. The war in America had not been so rich in military reputations that England could afford to bear hard upon the most accomplished and chivalrous of all her generals. Seldom had the

British infantry been taken into action in such artistic and dashing style, and seen through their work with such close attention to the varying aspects of the fray, as at Brandywine, and Camden, and Guildford Court House; and, whether correct or incorrect, there was a firm persuasion among Cornwallis's countrymen that, if he had all along been in chief command, and if Lord George Germaine had been forbidden to meddle, the issue of the struggle with our revolted Colonies might have been very different.

To be captured with his army has generally been accounted the ruin of a general's fame, and the end of his professional career. Such was the experience of Burgoyne at Saratoga, and of Mack at Ulm, and of Dupont at Baylen; but it was otherwise with Cornwallis. In the autumn of 1794, when the French Republic was proving itself too strong for its adversaries, the three ablest among our Ministers were united in their desire that the Marquis of Cornwallis should be placed in chief command of the British and Austrian armies in Flanders. That was the view of Pitt, and of Grenville, and notably of William Windham, who had a knowledge of war most unusual in an English statesman, and who was then living at the Duke of York's head-quarters, in face of the enemy, in order to see with his own eyes where the responsibility for our disasters lay. King George, unfortunately for the success of our arms, made the question into a matter personal to himself, and would not allow his own son to be superseded; but, both before and after that date, whenever and wherever the highest qualities of the warrior and the ruler were demanded, Cornwallis was always sent to the front in preference to others. Nor did he ever fail to justify the confidence reposed in him. He made a fine record in India, and in Ireland, and again in India, where he died in harness; and yet, — though public gratitude, and public affection, attended him from first to last, — he seldom was more respected and beloved than when in March 1782 he

landed in England, a paroled prisoner, fresh from the disaster at Yorktown.[1]

Only two days after the fatal tidings from America arrived in London Parliament was assembled to listen to a King's Speech which had been very hastily rewritten to suit the altered circumstances. How deep was the despondency which prevailed in the Ministerialist ranks may be judged by a contemporary letter from a supporter of the Government who voted with his party to the very last. Anthony Storer, one of the members for the borough of Morpeth, was a man of fashion and pleasure, "the best dancer and skater of his time," and a frequent and familiar guest in the Prime Minister's household. On the evening before the Session opened Lord North, as then was customary, called together a meeting of his followers. "I had attended the Cockpit to-night," said Storer, "where there were a great many long faces. What we are to do after Lord Cornwallis's catastrophe, God knows; or how anybody can think there is the least glimmering of hope for this nation surpasses my comprehension. * * * The Speech from the Throne contains the same Resolution, which appeared in times when we seemed to have a more favourable prospect of success, of continuing the war, and of claiming the aid of Parliament to support the rights of Great Britain. Charles has a Cockpit to-night as well as Lord North."[2] On the next afternoon, in the House of Commons, when the Seconder of the Address resumed his seat, Fox plunged straight

[1] On September the 19th, 1794, Windham, who then was Secretary at War in Pitt's Government, addressed a confidential letter to the Prime Minister from the British head-quarters in the field. "It is a game," (he wrote,) "of great skill on either side. If I could, by wishing, set down the general of my choice, I should certainly choose, as the player of that game, my Lord Cornwallis. His authority would do more to correct the abuses of the army. His experience would conduct it better. Should an action be brought on, the army under him would infallibly act with a degree of confidence more, I am sorry to say, than it does under the Duke of York."

[2] The Cockpit of old Whitehall Palace stood on the opposite side of the street from the Banqueting House, in front of the present Treasury.

into the heart of the American question; and in due course of time he reached the topic which was uppermost in the thoughts of all his hearers. "The whole conduct of Lord Cornwallis," (he said,) "was great and distinguished. While enterprise, activity, and expedition were wanted no man had more of these qualities. At last, when prudence became necessary, he took up a station which, in any former period of our history, would have been a perfect asylum, and planted himself on the edge of the sea. In former wars the sea was regarded as the country of an English commander, to which he could retire with safety, if not with fame. There he was invincible, whatever might be his strength on shore; and there Lord Cornwallis stationed his army, in the hope of preserving his communication with New York,—nay, with the city and port of London. But even this was denied him, for the ocean was no longer the country of an Englishman; and the noble Lord was blocked up, though planted on the borders of the sea." The effect of those weighty and telling sentences was all the stronger because, up to that point in the speech, the name of the First Lord of the Admiralty, the real and principal culprit, had not been so much as mentioned.

Storer, as in friendship and loyalty bound, sent an account of the debate to Lord Carlisle, the patron of his borough. "Charles Fox," (he wrote,) "who did not speak as well as he usually does according to the opinion of many, yet in mine was astonishingly great. I never attended to any speech half so much, nor ever did I discover such classical passages in any modern performance. Besides that, (I own,) he convinced me. * * * I did not hear Mr. William Pitt, which I regret very much, as it is said he has even surpassed Charles, and greater expectations are formed from him even than from the other." Pitt had indeed spoken impressively, calling upon the Ministers to break through the silence in which their plans for the future were shrouded; asking whether gentlemen were still disposed to place their

trust in men who hitherto had made so bad a use of the confidence of Parliament; and blaming the Government for insisting upon the presentation of an Address so worded as to tie Parliament down to the prosecution of a war of the impropriety, absurdity, injustice, and ruinous tendency of which every man then present was convinced. "The moment Mr. Pitt sat down a buzz of applause pervaded the House;" and within the fortnight he was up again, addressing the Commons "with his usual force and elegance." There was only one thing, (he affirmed,) in which Ministers seemed to be agreed, and that was in their resolution to destroy the empire which they were called upon to save. "This he feared they would accomplish before the indignation of a great and suffering people should fall upon their heads in the punishment which they deserved; and, (said the Honourable Gentleman in a beautiful conclusion,) may God only grant that that punishment may not be so long delayed as to involve within it a great and innocent family, who, though they can have no share in the guilt, may, and most likely will, be doomed to suffer the consequences!" It would have been interesting to watch King George's countenance while he was reading that audacious peroration in the columns of the newspaper over his early breakfast on the following morning.

The sentiments of patriotic Englishmen of both parties, and of no party, are faithfully reproduced for us in William Cowper's letters. Ever since he had been in a condition to resume an interest in public affairs he had clung, in spite of occasional disillusions and disappointments, to his cherished belief that the Royal policy would ultimately prevail; but his judgment was too sound to withstand the evidence of Yorktown, and he communicated his change of view to John Newton in quiet and explicit terms. If the King and his Ministry, (he wrote,) could be contented to close the business there, it might be well for Old England; but, if they persevered, they would find it a hopeless task. "These are my politics; and, for aught I can see, you and we by

our respective firesides, — though neither connected with men in power, nor professing to possess any share of that sagacity which thinks itself qualified to wield the affairs of Kingdoms, — can make as probable conjectures, and look forward into futurity with as clear a sight, as the greatest man in the Cabinet."

The current of William Cowper's prose ran strong and clear; but his deepest emotions found their natural expression in verse. Patriotism, informed by manly common sense, and dignified and purified by religious conviction, has seldom attained a higher level than in the seventy or eighty couplets which may be read midway between the commencement, and the close, of his Table Talk.

> "Poor England! Thou art a devoted deer,
> Beset with every ill but that of fear.
> The nations hunt. All mark thee for a prey.
> They swarm around thee, and thou stand'st at bay,
> Undaunted still, though wearied and perplexed.
> Once Chatham saved thee; but who saves thee next?"

He might well ask that question. There was a member of Lord North's Cabinet whose name had long been a proverb for prosperous mediocrity. The Right Honourable Welbore Ellis began to draw salary as a Lord of the Admiralty in the year 1747, and he had been drawing salary ever since. He was now Treasurer of the Navy, a post of which the profits, undoubtedly very large, were estimated by the Opposition at twenty thousand pounds a year. "He has," wrote one of his critics, "a great deal of importance in his manner, and that sort of bowing, cringing politeness which, with the affectation of business, has imposed upon every king, and every minister, and has kept him always in place. His influence at Court must be very considerable, when, during the course of three years, he could get an Irish Barony for his eldest nephew, an Irish bishoprick for his second, and a Commissionership of Customs for the third."[1]

[1] *History of the Members of the House of Commons;* London Evening Post, May 1779. Ellis had twice been Vice-Treasurer of Ireland, with

But the advantages which Ellis had secured for himself, and for his family, would have been dearly bought, in the estimation of a self-respecting man, by the disagreeable prominence to which his political advancement condemned him. For a generation and a half in the annals of London society he was a stock object of ridicule to all the wittiest people of his own rank in both the two parties. As far back as 1763 Horace Walpole met him walking in the meadows near Strawberry Hill, and found him "so emptily important, and distilling paragraphs of old news with such solemnity," that he did not know "whether it was a man, or the Utrecht Gazette." Five years later on Lord Carlisle, in a letter from Rome, was complaining to George Selwyn about the high price of antique marbles. "Do you think," he asked, "that the sarcophagus of such a man as Welbore Ellis will ever be sold for twopence? and yet here they ask ten pounds for those of persons not at all more famous." But inferior organisms have their place in the world of politics, as in the world of nature. Members of the House of Commons had long ago come to regard Ellis as one of the established institutions of the country, and they listened with tolerance to a patriarch who had bored their grandfathers in the days when Mr. Pelham was Prime Minister. On those frequent occasions when Parliament was in a tumult over a Ministerial scandal too bad to be defended by argument, Ellis, "the Forlorn Hope of the Treasury Bench," would rise in his place, with a conciliatory smile on his countenance, and pour forth a stream of irrelevant truisms and commonplaces until the first fury of the storm had abated.

When, as the central calamity in a long and unbroken series of disasters, the surrender of Lord Cornwallis appeared in the London Gazette it was a foregone conclusion in every quarter, and most of all among Lord George Germaine's colleagues in the cabinet, that Lord

very large emoluments from the Irish Treasury, although he did not reside in Ireland, but at Pope's villa on the Thames near Twickenham, where he altered, and spoiled, the garden.

George Germaine must go. No one had a word to say in defence of the disgraced and discredited soldier who, as American Secretary, had misdirected two gallant armies to their ruin from his office in Downing Street, three thousand miles across the water. The Minden Court-Martial, when taken in connection with Saratoga and Yorktown, formed a triple burden too heavy for any reputation in the world to bear. The King might have replaced the departing Minister by a far more efficient successor if he had been willing to subordinate his own personal likes and dislikes to the safety of the State. In either House of Parliament there were distinguished soldiers, who at the same time were popular statesmen and tried administrators; but none of them would accept that obligation of implicit subservience to the Royal will, and wholesale adoption of the Royal policy, which their monarch demanded from all his Ministers. If the Archangel Michael had come down from heaven, with an offer to marshal the hosts of England for battle, George the Third would have felt no hesitation in rejecting his services unless he had voted with the Court on the question of the Middlesex Election. In the absolute dearth of public men who were compliant, as well as capable, the King fell back upon the resources of his existing Cabinet, and appointed Welbore Ellis to the post of Secretary of State for the American Department. And so it came to pass that an old official hack, who was now approaching his hundred and fortieth quarter-day, was commissioned by his Sovereign to fill the part of Chatham at a crisis far graver than that which, in June 1759, Chatham himself had been called upon to encounter.

The Ministers knew not which way to turn. Fox was cutting their case to ribbons in debate, and Pitt was thundering away like a re-incarnation of that terrible cornet of horse who, five-and-forty years before, had been too much for the nerves even of Sir Robert Walpole. Dundas the Lord Advocate, — one of the most impudent and unscrupulous, and perhaps one of the

ablest, politicians of his own, or any other time, — viewed their cause as hopeless, and already meditated desertion. From this moment forward, whenever he rose for the ostensible purpose of defending his colleagues, he adopted with extraordinary skill a line of argument more embarrassing to the Court and Cabinet than the direct assaults of the Opposition orators. The Livery of London voted a Grand Remonstrance against that prolongation of the American war which had been indicated in the Speech from the Throne. "They besought the King to remove both his public and *private* counsellors, and used these stunning and memorable words: *Your armies are captured. The wonted superiority of your navies is annihilated. Your dominions are lost.*"[1] A crowded meeting of Westminster electors assembled in Westminster Hall to consider an Address to the Throne very similar to that which had emanated from the Livery; and it was almost certain that, if Parliament continued sitting, the example of the metropolis would be imitated in all free and independent constituencies throughout the country. Englishmen, irrespective of party, were determined that Lord Cornwallis should not be made a scapegoat for the sins of his official superiors; and Chancellor Thurlow told the King that notice had been given of no fewer than twelve separate motions of censure on Lord Sandwich in one or another of the two Houses. The Prime Minister and Mr. John Robinson, between them, could hit upon no better resource than to adjourn Parliament over Christmas until the fourth week of January 1782. "Good God!" cried Mr. George Byng. "Adjourn now, when we ought to sit even during the holidays to inquire into the late miscarriage!" Mr. Thomas Townshend and Mr. Charles Fox recalled to the memory of their brother members the parallel state of things in December 1777; — how Parliament, in face of a very

[1] *Last Journals;* December 4, 1781. The italics are Horace Walpole's. The phrase "private counsellors" was a reference to the legend concerning the secret influence of the Earl of Bute.

solemn protest from the Earl of Chatham, was adjourned for the space of six weeks in consequence of a personal assurance from Lord North that "neither France, nor Spain, had the least intention to molest us;" how the whole of the ensuing January was spent in preparations against an imminent invasion of our island; and how, in the first week of February 1778, a Treaty of Amity and Alliance was signed between the Royal Government of France and the United States of America. But the House of Commons can never bring itself to look with disfavour upon the proposal of a holiday; and, in spite of all that Fox could urge, the motion for an adjournment was carried.

It was an ill-advised step on the part of Ministers. Over and above their natural desire for a respite from parliamentary attack they were prompted by the hope of a military or naval success which might do something to repair their tattered credit. Sanguine expectations had been aroused, not in Government circles only, by the knowledge that Admiral Kempenfeldt had received orders to intercept the Comte de Guichen's fleet on its way out to the West Indies. But the Earl of Sandwich, in the face of repeated warnings from non-official sources, had provided Kempenfeldt with only twelve ships of the line, although a much stronger force just then was at the disposal of the Admiralty; and, when the French hove in sight, they had with them twenty men-of-war, five of which carried a hundred and ten guns apiece. Kempenfeldt, who was a better seaman than his opponent, captured a good many of Admiral de Guichen's store-vessels and transports, but did not venture to risk an engagement with his fighting fleet. The waste of that unique opportunity for inflicting a deadly blow on the naval power of France was felt and resented by the British public almost as keenly as a lost battle. When Parliament met after the Christmas recess the House of Commons, at the instance of Charles Fox, resolved itself into a Committee to inquire into the Causes of the Want of Success of the British Navy;

and his speech displayed a breadth of knowledge, and an acuteness of observation, which proved him to be a thorough master of his subject. On the seventh of February 1782, as soon as the Committee was formed, "the clerks, one relieving the other, read through all the papers that had at various times been laid upon the table in consequence of motions made by Mr. Fox. The reading of these papers took up three hours." Mr. Fox then brought forward five charges of culpable negligence against the Earl of Sandwich, and proposed a vote of personal censure on that noble Lord which was supported by a hundred and eighty-three members against two hundred and five. A fortnight afterwards, returning to the assault, he moved that, in the opinion of the House, His Majesty's naval affairs had been greatly mismanaged in the course of the year 1781, and he was defeated by less than a score of votes in a House of about four hundred and sixty members.[1]

All through December 1781 there had been heavy and even betting whether Germaine or Sandwich would be offered up as the earliest sacrifice for the propitiation of an outraged and angry public. It was noticed that Sandwich, for the first time in his life, looked worn and harassed. His colleagues were impatient to be rid of him, but the King was determined to keep him; and, when the King and the Ministers differed, His Majesty usually contrived to carry the day.[2] Horace

[1] In the eleventh chapter of his *Influence of Sea Power upon History* Admiral Mahan remarks that the Ministry sent out Kempenfeldt with only twelve ships, although a number of others were stationed in the Downs for what Fox justly called "the paltry purpose" of distressing the Dutch trade. "The various charges made by Fox," (so Mahan writes,) "which were founded mainly on the expediency of attacking the Allies before they got away into the ocean wilderness, were supported by the high professional opinion of Lord Howe, who of the Kempenfeldt affair said: 'Not only the fate of the West Indies, but the whole future fortune of the war, might have been decided, almost without a risk, in the Bay of Biscay.'"

[2] "Your friends," (wrote James Hare to Lord Carlisle,) "really make too bad a figure at present. Their keeping Lord Sandwich is madness;

Walpole, an onlooker who understood the game, was of opinion that Fox would do well henceforward to leave Lord Sandwich alone. "I told him of it," said Walpole, "and of his wasting his fire on a secondary character, whom all the rest were willing to sacrifice. I advised him to make his push at Lord North, as, if the key-stone could be removed, the whole edifice would fall." Fox listened to the advice with a courtesy which flattered the giver; but he knew his House of Commons by heart, and he had already perceived that the time had come for giving the Ministry its *coup-de-grâce*. His plan of campaign met the approval of his associates, and the next four weeks witnessed as animated and sustained a conflict as ever was fought out by constitutional methods within the walls of any senate. Votes of want of confidence were brought forward in rapid succession by leading members of the Opposition, were discussed in short and sharp debates, and were decided by extraordinarily narrow majorities. Charles Fox directed the operations with rare sagacity and self-command. The political extravagancies of his early youth had been many and notorious, and mistakes of a more fatal and irreparable character lay ahead of him in the near future; but, at this period of his career, his parliamentary strategy and tactics were nothing short of faultless. He kept himself mostly in the background; and it was only when a critical moment came that he spoke, briefly and authoritatively, not so much to instruct his audience about the merits of the case as to explain and recommend the practical course of action which it behoved them to adopt.

Fox was the less tempted to exert his faculty for persuasion because unanswerable and irresistible arguments were pouring in upon the House of Commons from every quarter of the compass. In the third week of March news arrived that the Comte de Grasse

but I believe his dismissal does not depend on them. If it did, he would soon be removed."

had captured from us the island of St. Kitts, and that Port Mahon, the capital of Minorca, had surrendered, after a prolonged siege, to a French and Spanish army. Lord Sandwich was very generally held responsible for the fate of Minorca, and most people were inclined to think that, exactly a quarter of a century before, Admiral Byng had been shot for less. "In whatever light," (wrote a vigorous pamphleteer,) "we may view the American dispute, there is a point upon which every person in Great Britain is agreed, which is that all our defeats and misfortunes have been owing to the mismanagement of the navy. If any man had said six months ago that Minorca would change its master, without surprise or stratagem, by the slow advances of the dull Spaniard, with all the opportunities and means that heart could wish to find relief, he would have been esteemed an enemy to his country, and a spy for France and Spain. The House of Bourbon has now the entire possession of the empire of the Mediterranean." The loss of Minorca, no light blow in itself, presaged a still greater misfortune; for the fall of Gibraltar was a conceivable, and even probable, calamity which was seldom absent from the minds of Englishmen, but about which they did not love to talk.

Fox, who was exceedingly busy behind the scenes of the political theatre, kept a watchful eye upon all his followers. He spared no pains to inform himself where his people were to be found, and to get them into the Lobby at the right moment. Never had his appeals to parliamentary truants, — to their wives, their brothers, and, (in case of necessity,) even to their parents, — been more urgently worded, and more persuasive and efficacious. The personal popularity which Charles Fox enjoyed outside the borders of his own party had a recognisable effect upon the turn of affairs during those eventful weeks. Among the large number of Ministerialists who went over to the Opposition, or who remained neutral, was Mr. Crawford of Auchinanes. "The Fish," wrote Selwyn, "did not vote

last night, which he was much impatient to discover to Charles, with one of his fulsome compliments." It was an ill-natured way of putting it; and the more so because Selwyn confessed that he himself was convinced by Fox's speech, and had voted against his conscience on as important an issue as ever was submitted to Parliament.[1] The most alert and enterprising of Fox's lieutenants, — or, (to speak more accurately,) of his allies, — was William Pitt. "He is at the head," said George Selwyn, "of a half-dozen young people, and it is a corps separate from that of Charles's; so there is another Premier at the starting-post, who as yet has never been shaved." That must have been the most enjoyable episode of Pitt's parliamentary existence. He was always active, and always prominent. He told in the divisions, he spoke nine times in less than two months, and his speeches never failed to keep the House alive. On one occasion he announced, to an audience which doubted whether to admire or laugh, that he was firmly resolved not to accept office below the Cabinet. On another occasion he surprised, and less than half pleased, those of his brother members who sat for proprietary boroughs, by exhorting them to have regard for the feelings and interests of their constituents; although he himself, (it must be admitted,) had no constituent worth mentioning except Sir James Lowther. And he took about with him in his pocket a scheme of Parliamentary Reform which, before the Session ended, he came within twenty votes of carrying into law. Reformers, (it has been well remarked,) never again had so good a division till the year 1831.

On the twenty-second of February 1782 General Conway moved an Address praying His Majesty that the war on the Continent of North America might no longer

[1] The tone which Selwyn always used when writing of Crawford was most unjust. Crawford, though too prone to introspection and self-pity, was a man of wit and ability, and a true friend to all the Fox connection. His letters to Lord Ossory, — for whose sister, the young widow of poor Stephen Fox, he had entertained a deep and hopeless affection, — prove that he sincerely repented his past support of the American war.

be pursued for the impracticable purpose of reducing the inhabitants of that country to obedience by force. Conway's record on the American question was clear and consistent. In the year 1766 he had proposed, and carried, the repeal of the Stamp Act; and in 1775 he refused to serve against the colonists without forfeiting the confidence and good-will of his brother soldiers. Conway's valour was above proof, and his authority on strategical questions stood very high. During his earlier campaigns, foregoing his immunities as a staff-officer, he had plunged over and over again into the rough and tumble of cavalry combat; and in the Seven Years' War, as Major General and Lieutenant General, he had participated with credit in arduous and important operations both by sea and land.

The House of Commons listened with respectful attention to his searching analysis of the military situation. He showed how, — at a time when our shores were under constant threat of invasion, and when there were no spare troops for the relief of our Mediterranean garrisons, or for aggressive operations on European soil, — we maintained on the other side of the Atlantic a far larger British army than the Duke of Marlborough, or Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick, had ever led to victory in Flanders or Germany;[1] and how nevertheless, at the crucial moment of the campaign, Clinton and Cornwallis could muster for combat only fourteen thousand rank and file between them. He adjured the Ministry to explain how the strength of our American army had been frittered away in the past, and to indi-

[1] On this point I am allowed to quote a private letter from Colonel Gerald Boyle. When Sir Guy Carleton succeeded Sir Henry Clinton at New York he took over the Royal troops in America, diminished, (it must be remembered,) by the seven thousand soldiers who had been captured with Lord Cornwallis. "A Return of the Army under Sir Guy Carleton," writes Colonel Boyle, "shows him to have had quite 31,000 of all ranks under his command, besides 2300 British and German recruits *en route* to join him. General Haldimand had about 5000 in Canada." I take this last opportunity of expressing my admiration of Colonel Boyle's researches into the Revolutionary War, and his infinite kindness in placing the fruit of those researches at my disposal.

cate, at least in outline, their warlike policy for the future. Welbore Ellis, who had no answer ready, rambled on in a helpless and bewildered strain which provoked derision in some quarters, and compassion in others; and the case was not mended by the interposition of Mr. Jenkinson, the Secretary at War. Jenkinson announced that it was the intention of the Government to convert the war in America into "a war of posts;" and he then proceeded to state, for the information of Honourable Gentlemen, what he meant by that expression. "His idea was that we were to keep no regular army in the field; but, in keeping those posts we had, we might add others to them whenever they should be found advantageous to us; thus affording us the means of attacking the enemy if an opportunity served of doing it with success." It was a cheerless programme for the eighth year of a war which professed to be a war of re-conquest, and it altogether failed to arouse the enthusiasm of Parliament. Lord North escaped defeat by a bare majority of one vote in a House of three hundred and ninety members. Eight months previously a proposal, to all intents and purposes the same motion, had been rejected by a hundred and seventy-two votes to ninety-nine, — which was as nearly as possible in the proportion of seven to four.

On the twenty-fifth of February Lord North introduced his Budget. He asked for a Loan larger by a million than the enormous Loan of the preceding year. The Three Per Cents had dropped to 54, and, in order to raise thirteen millions of ready money for present needs, the nation was saddled with an obligation to repay twenty-four millions whenever the Debt came to be liquidated. Those new taxes which North proposed, though vexatious in kind, were insignificant in amount. The war was being fought on credit; and there was a limit even to the credit of Great Britain which, unless a change came over the face of politics, would erelong be reached. Our fighting services in the current year cost three millions more than in the last year, and five

millions more than in the last year but one.[1] The war in Europe had gone against us; the attitude of the Northern Powers was hostile and minatory; and, after Yorktown, all prospect of recovering our rebellious Colonies by arms was further off than ever. Such were the circumstances under which, if the King had his way, England was never to make peace with America as long as the Chancellor of the Exchequer could negotiate a loan on the money-market. Our people had come to regard the Cabinet as the shareholders of a coal-mine on the sea-coast, when the water which floods the galleries begins to taste of salt, would regard a board of Directors who persisted in trying to pump out the German Ocean. Parliament at last took the matter into its own hands, and stopped the Ministers in their mad career. It was not a day too soon for the interests of the Treasury. Lord Sheffield, — the friend of Gibbon, a staunch adherent of Lord North, and a specialist in the statistics of foreign and colonial commerce, — reckoned that the increase of the National Debt entailed on Great Britain by the American war, and by the wars arising out of it, amounted to forty-five times the average annual value of British exports to the American colonies during the six years that preceded the military occupation of Boston. That is the measure, as expressed in arithmetical figures, of the foresight and capacity displayed by George the Third and his chosen servants.[2]

Two days after the presentation of the Budget Conway, in accordance with notice given, repeated his

[1] During the period anterior to the American troubles the cost of the Army, Navy, and Ordnance Services together did not much exceed three million pounds per annum. In 1780 that cost had risen to near fifteen millions; in 1781 it reached seventeen millions; and in 1782 it passed the point of twenty millions. By the year 1787 Mr. Pitt, as Prime Minister and Chancellor of the Exchequer, had brought it down again to four millions and a quarter. It is a figure to make a modern economist's mouth water.

[2] *Observations on the Commerce of the American States, by John Lord Sheffield; with an Appendix containing tables of the Imports and Exports of Great Britain to and from all Ports, from 1700 to 1783. London; 1784.*

former motion with a slight change of form, but no change in substance. It was a night when a vote would be a vote; and the Opposition had assembled in full force, and in a determined mood. Fox had summoned all his friends around him.[1] Many of the Ministerialists had scruples about opposing Conway; and many were inclined to support him, including certain young politicians who had a shining and honourable future before them. Such was William Wilberforce, who had been elected for Hull almost immediately after he came of age, and who had begun his parliamentary career by voting with the Government. And such, again, was Sir Gilbert Elliot, afterwards that Earl of Minto who, during seven critical years, was a wise, a conscientious, and a most successful Governor General of India. His father was the late Sir Gilbert Elliot, by far the ablest among the King's Friends; but the son did not inherit any love for the King's system. Burke's great speech on Economical Reform had captured all his sympathies. "From that time," we are told, "dated his friendship with Mr. Burke, which soon ripened into warm and reciprocal affection. But it was not till the Spring of 1782 that he finally abandoned all hope of a favourable issue to the American War."[2]

The supreme hour had struck. Conway put together a weighty and conclusive argument, to which Lord North replied in the doleful and desponding accents of a man who had lost faith in his own cause. It was a severe ordeal for him to face a phalanx of such

[1] "Your Grace may be very sure," (so Fox wrote to an eminent nobleman,) "that, after what I have heard of Lord Edward's health, and with the regard I have for him, I should not think of wishing him to come to town unless I thought his presence might be very material indeed. * * * I have not written to Lord Edward himself because I had rather you should judge of the propriety of his coming than he, who might be apt to think himself more able to bear it than he really is. If he can come without danger of hurting himself I really think it very material he should. If he cannot, I am sure you yourself can not be more averse to his coming than I should be." It is almost unnecessary to say that Lord Edward came.

[2] That is the account of Sir Gilbert Elliot's change of view, as given by the Countess of Minto in her admirable biography of her great-uncle.

antagonists without a single speaker of the first order to aid and abet him. Thurlow had been in the House of Lords for some years past. Wedderburn, the most eloquent of Law Officers, had recently left the House of Commons, and had taken refuge from coming evils in the Chief Justiceship of the Common Pleas; and it was Mr. Attorney General Wallace who, on behalf of the Government, moved that the debate should be adjourned until that day fortnight. Mr. Pitt denounced him for trifling with the common sense of Parliament; Mr. Sheridan "delighted the House with a most admirable piece of satire;" and Mr. Fox "in a few minutes set the matter in issue in a most clear and forcible point of view. He urged the propriety of the motion made by the Honourable General, and exposed the paltry stratagem to which Ministers were reduced, in the last moments of their existence, to gain a short week, or a day, of breath."[1] At half past one in the morning a division was taken on the Attorney General's motion for adjournment, and the Government was beaten by nineteen votes. "It was the declaration," (wrote Edmund Burke,) "of two hundred and thirty-four members. I think it was the opinion of the whole." Burke rightly interpreted the feeling of the assembly. The original motion was put, and agreed to in silence; and five days afterwards Conway clenched the matter by carrying, without opposition, a Resolution to the effect that all who advised or attempted, the further prosecution of offensive war upon the Continent of America should be considered as enemies to His Majesty, and to the country. No more important decision was ever deliberately, and unanimously, made by the House of Commons.[2]

[1] *Parliamentary History*, XXII, 1081–1084. After the speeches of the mover, and the Prime Minister, the rest of the debate was very cursorily reported.

[2] Lord North, in a private letter to Lord Dartmouth, commented severely on Conway as having grieved and insulted a monarch who was "his best benefactor." Readers of the Wilkes controversy may be puzzled to understand on what foundation that charge of ingratitude was based. Lord Stanhope, who has no love for the memory of Wilkes,

The centre of political interest was henceforward transferred from the House of Commons to the Royal Closet. The Government had suffered a crushing defeat; but there was one behind the Government who had no inclination whatever to accept that defeat as final. The Opposition leaders had long been aware that, when contending with the Ministry, they were contending with the King. Some months previously Charles Fox had thrilled the House by a fine quotation from Dante. The Prime Minister, (he said,) was a man of experience. He was naturally inclined to moderation and mildness. "How then was he induced to become so strenuous a supporter of the American war? He might put an answer in the noble Lord's mouth from an Italian poet: 'My will to execute this deed is derived from Him who has both the will and the power to execute it. Ask no further questions.'"[1]

But North's capacity for passive obedience was at last exhausted. Before eleven o'clock in the morning after the division on Conway's motion he informed the King that he could no longer remain in office. George the Third was endowed with a clear insight into the relative values of public men; and he was not mistaken in his belief that Lord North was indispensable. If he commissioned Welbore Ellis, or Rigby, or Lord Nugent, or Jenkinson to lead the House of Commons, — and he no longer had any others to choose from, — the Ministerial party would have gone to pieces within the week. The King endeavoured to recall North to his duty by frequent interviews, and by a series of brief and unstudied letters full of historical interest, and more remarkable still in their bearing on human character.

states in his History that "the most eminent lawyers of the day, headed by Chief Justice Pratt," on consideration held General Warrants "to be utterly illegal." And yet, as a punishment for recording a vote against the legality of General Warrants, the King dismissed Conway from his place in the Bedchamber, and deprived him of the Colonelcy of a Regiment which had been conferred upon him as a reward for distinguished services in the field.

[1] *Inferno;* III, 95.

Stern reproofs, and vehement expostulations, alternated with dark allusions to an unexplained course of action by which the Royal chagrin and displeasure would be manifested to the world. "I am resolved," he wrote, "not to throw myself into the hands of Opposition at all events, and shall certainly, if things go as they seem to lead, know what my conscience, as well as honour, dictates as the only way left for me."[1] The King's repugnance to acknowledge the United States as an independent nation was fixed and resolute as ever. He regarded the dispute with his rebellious Colonies as a matter personal to himself; and, if only Parliament had stood by him, he would have fought America as long as he was able to press a sailor, or raise a guinea. George the Third would have been more in his place as a monarch if he had been born four or five centuries before his own epoch. Although he was altogether devoid of the military intuition, and the statesmanlike astuteness, of the First and Third Edwards, he had as high a courage, and a temper as hot, as any Plantagenet that ever swore by the Splendour of God. But he had met his match in an adversary with a will not less strong, and an intellect far more vivid, than his own. "Here is a man," said Doctor Johnson, "who has divided the Kingdom with Cæsar, so that it was a doubt whether the nation should be ruled by the sceptre of George the Third, or the tongue of Fox;" and in March 1782 matters had come to such a pass for England that the brave old Tory, the author of "Taxation no Tyranny," rejoiced that Fox had got the better of his Sovereign.

The Prime Minister was inexorable, and the King submitted to his fate. After three more weeks of damaging speeches, and crowded and significant divisions, Lord North, exhibiting his habitual good taste and good temper amidst a scene of confusion and excitement, an-

[1] His Majesty, (according to some historians,) had imagined, and had even begun to put in train, a scheme for withdrawing himself out of England, and retiring to his Hanoverian dominions. Authentic evidence on that point is wanting.

nounced that His Majesty had come to a full determination to choose other Ministers. "For himself," (he said,) "he hoped to God, whoever those Ministers might be, they would take such measures as should tend effectually to extricate the country from its present difficulties, and to render it happy and prosperous at home, successful and secure abroad." On Wednesday the twenty-seventh of March 1782 the members of the new Government attended a Levee at Saint James's Palace. "I could not go to Court," wrote George Selwyn. "My temper would not permit. I could have seen my Royal Master on the scaffold with less pain than insulted as he has been to-day."[1]

A crowd of Londoners, who had no sinecures to lose, pointed out to each other the occupants of that line of chariots with more friendly and hopeful feelings than those which actuated poor George Selwyn. Rockingham kissed hands as First Lord of the Treasury. Lord John Cavendish became Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Duke of Richmond Master of the Ordnance, and General Conway Commander-in-Chief of the Forces. Lord Camden was President of the Council, and Dunning Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, with a seat in the House of Peers as Baron Ashburton. The Privy Seal was given to the Duke of Grafton. Thomas Townshend was Secretary at War, Barré Treasurer of the Navy, and Sheridan an Under Secretary of State; while Jack Townshend received the Civil Lordship of the Admiralty, — an office which is the due of youth. Dundas, who had trimmed at the right moment, remained Lord Advocate; and the King was allowed to insist upon keeping Lord Thurlow as his Chancellor.

[1] Gibbon, in strong contradistinction to Selwyn, took his misfortune like the philosopher that he was. When the Board of Trade was abolished he wrote: "I have been prepared for this event, and can support it with firmness. I am not without resources; and my best resource is in the cheerfulness and tranquillity of a mind which in any place, and in any situation, can always secure its own independent happiness. * * * Next Wednesday I conclude my forty-fifth year, and, in spite of the changes of Kings and Ministers, I am very glad that I was born."

The most important people in the new Administration were the two Secretaries of State, the Earl of Shelburne, and Charles Fox. On the last occasion that Fox went to a Levee he had brought with him an Address from the Citizens of Westminster. "The King took it out of his hand without deigning to give him a look or a word. He took it as you would take a pocket-handkerchief from your valet-de-chambre, without any mark of displeasure or attention, or expression of countenance whatever, and passed it to his Lord in waiting, who was the Duke of Queensberry." Times had now changed with Charles Fox; and Charles Fox, like a man of sense, had changed a little with the times. He rented a house north of Piccadilly, close to that occupied by Crawford of Auchinanes, the reformed and sobered companion of his early years, in whose rather depressing company, for some while to come, he was content to live. James Hare relates that Fox seldom now looked in at Brooks's, and never dined there, "to the disappointment of those members who had paid up arrears of four or five years' subscription in order that they might enjoy the society of a Minister." It was noticed that the London world, which hitherto had never called him anything but "Charles," began henceforward to speak of him as "Mr. Fox."

Fox, who intended to take the settlement of the Irish difficulty under his own special charge in Parliament, had a great deal to do with the Irish appointments. The Duke of Portland was sent as Viceroy to supersede the Earl of Carlisle at Dublin Castle, with Richard Fitzpatrick, — the lifelong confidant of Fox, and an Irishman to the heart's core, — for his Chief Secretary; and Charles, who was not the man to leave an old friend out in the cold, contrived to procure the Stewardship of the Household for Lord Carlisle. A most judicious and popular selection, which had an immediate influence for good upon the fortunes of England, was the nomination of Keppel as First Lord of the Admiralty. Confidence and alacrity at once revived throughout the whole Naval

Service. Famous sailors, Whig and Tory, emerged from their retirement at the invitation of a superior on whose personal loyalty they could rely, and showed their welcome faces once more in Whitehall, and on the quarter-deck. Admiral Harland took his seat at the Board, where he was almost as useful as at sea. Lord Howe hoisted his flag on the Victory, the finest vessel in the Channel Fleet; and Admiral Barrington gladly and proudly served under him as the second in command in a quarter where, some years before, he had refused to command in chief.

The day was past and gone when the annual appearance of a combined French and Spanish armada in the Channel sent the British fleet into harbour with the regularity of an autumn manœuvre. Barrington, while cruising in the Bay of Biscay, sighted a convoy laden with men for the re-inforcement, and with spars and rigging for the re-equipment, of the Bailli de Suffren's much battered squadron in the East Indies; and, after a smart chase, and a sharp night battle, in which Captain Jervis gained much honour, the British admiral captured a vessel or two of the Line, and thirteen out of nineteen transports and store-ships. Howe himself went outside the Scilly Islands to look for the Jamaica merchant-fleet, the arrival of which was awaited at Bristol, and in the City of London, with anxiety justified by a cruel experience. There was joy and relief on 'Change when it was known that the most skilful of English sailors had brought the Jamaica fleet safe home almost beneath the guns of the enemy; and the news was none the less acceptable because part of the cargo which it carried was the Comte de Grasse, whom Rodney was sending back as a prisoner of war from the West Indies. And in the middle of October 1782, by consummate seamanship, and just as much fighting as was essential for the accomplishment of his purpose, Lord Howe conducted to a successful issue the re-provisioning of the Gibraltar food-stores, and the re-filling of the powder magazine which on the previous thirteenth of September had been

emptied with such memorable effect against the Duc de Crillon's floating batteries. Lord Howe's exploit reduced the French and Spanish commanders to despair, and was a prelude to the final abandonment of the siege.

On the twentieth of March 1782 Fox addressed to the House of Commons, and the country, some remarks of weighty import. "It had given him," he said, "great pleasure to hear an Honourable Member say, in a thin house, that he hoped, if His Majesty's Ministers were removed, those who should be appointed in their room would no longer govern by influence and corruption, and that, if persons who had been in Opposition came in, they would religiously adhere to their Opposition principles, and not let it be a mere change of hands without a change of measures."[1] The words of Fox were repeated, and enforced, in eloquent and excellent speeches by Burke and Conway; and, now that they had all three become Ministers, they proceeded without delay to make their words good. Burke, more to the disadvantage of Lord Rockingham's reputation than of his own, had been left outside the Cabinet; but he was appointed to the most lucrative post in England, and probably in the world, for he became Paymaster General of the Forces in the room of Rigby. It was an office which had enabled a long succession of holders to enrich themselves beyond what ought to have been the dreams of avarice by speculating with the balances of public money lying, far longer than they should lie, at their private bankers. Mr. Pitt indeed, as far back as the year 1746, had haughtily refused to traffic in funds which did not properly belong to him, and had paid the interest accruing from the balances into the Exchequer; but Burke went even further, and did not rest until he had made a root-and-branch reform of the objectionable system. He allotted

[1] *Parliamentary History;* XXII, 1221. The Member to whom Fox referred was probably the Honourable Charles Marsham, afterwards the Earl of Romney. He sat for Kent; and he was one of those independent country gentlemen who, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, were the salt of politics.

himself a fixed, and not immoderate, salary; and his well-considered arrangements increased the national revenue by nearly fifty thousand pounds a year, a full half of which would otherwise have passed into his own pocket.

Those disinterested motives, which inspired Burke as an individual, pervaded the Government as a whole. The Administration of the day had hitherto exercised a commanding influence at elections through the votes of Tide-waiters, and Gaugers, and Coastguardsmen distributed over scores of boroughs with more regard for the political dominance of the party in power than for the protection of the Revenue. Meanwhile the House of Commons swarmed with Ministerial mercenaries,—sinecurists, and semi-sinecurists, and Court-officials, and favoured contractors, and loan-mongers, and armament-mongers; and holders of secret pensions, dependent on pleasure, whose very names were studiously concealed from the public knowledge; and salaried occupants of colonial appointments who never visited their colony during the entire lifetime of a Parliament. The turn had now come for Lord Rockingham and his colleagues to profit by these monstrous abuses; but they were patriots of another cast from their predecessors, and they lost no time in divesting themselves of advantages which, in their view, did not conduce to the honour of the rulers, or to the welfare of the ruled. Within the first few months of their Ministerial existence they placed on the Statute Book Sir Philip Clerke's Contractors Bill; Mr. Crewe's Bill forbidding Revenue Officers from Voting at Elections; the most valuable provisions of Mr. Burke's Bill for the Better Regulation of His Majesty's Civil Establishments, for the Limitation of Pensions, and for the Suppression of sundry Useless, Expensive, and Inconvenient Offices; as well as Lord Shelburne's Bill compelling Persons, holding Places in the West Indies and America, to reside there. The same House of Commons which, when Lord North was its leader, had rejected all such measures by large majorities, accepted them from Charles Fox in silence,

and almost with unanimity. The largest minority recorded against any of those admirable laws numbered only fourteen votes. There is no more striking instance of the vital truth that a Government, which marches boldly along the path of probity, will always take the House of Commons with it. A noteworthy compliment has been paid to Lord Rockingham and his associates by an author distinguished for his comprehensive knowledge of our political history, and for his rare impartiality. If a Government, (so Mr. Lecky writes,) is to be estimated by the net result of what it has achieved, it must be acknowledged that few Ministries have done so much to elevate, and to purify, English public life as the Administration which came into power when Lord North fell.

And thus the Ministers, who had brought our country down from the heights of glory and prosperity to the Valley of the Shadow of Disaster, at length were expelled from office, and were succeeded by a Government pledged to restore the independence of Parliament, to re-establish the naval supremacy of Great Britain, to pacify Ireland, and to end the quarrel with America.

VALETE, QUOTQUOT ESTIS,
AMICI MEI IN UTRAQUE ORA

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